INTERNATIONAL THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

A MODEL FOR EQUIPPING LAY LEADERS FOR CHRISTIAN COUNSELING AS PART OF CHURCH GROWTH AND SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION IN THE CITY OF THANE, MAHARASHTRA, INDIA

By

Sanathkumar Chandrahas Putla

A Dissertation Presented to the Faculty of the

International Theological Seminary

In Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Ministry

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Dissertation Approval

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ABSTRACT

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This dissertation titled "A Model for Equipping Lay Leaders for Christian
Counseling as Part of Church Growth and Social Transformation in the City of Thane,
Maharashtra, India" addresses the pressing need for trained lay counselors within the
Indian context, particularly in Thane City. Lay counseling plays a vital role in supporting
believers in their faith journey, promoting church growth, and addressing the mental
health challenges faced by individuals and families. The research explores the
significance of lay counseling ministry within the Indian cultural and religious landscape,
emphasizing the biblical mandate for all Christians to minister to one another. Drawing
upon existing literature and empirical research findings, the dissertation proposes a
comprehensive model for equipping lay leaders for Christian counseling, tailored to the
specific needs of Thane City. The model integrates theological foundations with practical
counseling skills, cultural sensitivity, and evidence-based techniques, aiming to empower
lay leaders to provide compassionate and competent support to individuals in need.
Through collaborative efforts involving local churches, mental health organizations, and
community leaders, the proposed model seeks to foster holistic church growth and social
transformation, thereby addressing the mental health crisis and promoting well-being
within the city of Thane, Maharashtra, India.

Mentor: Dr. Ross Purdy   196 words

ENGLISH LANGUAGE DISCLAIMER

As a non-native speaker of English, I am aware that my writing may at times lack clarity, though I have attempted to write as clearly as possible. Please note that the primary purpose of this work is to acknowledge a theory and to apply it to a particular context. I appreciate the editorial assistance I have received from various individuals, but acknowledge that the responsibility for this work is entirely my own.

DEDICATION

Dedicated to my

Beloved

Father Rev. P. Chandrahas

Mother Mrs. P. Rahel

Sister Ms. P. Buela Rani

And

Beloved Grand Parents

Late Putla Purushottam

Late Putla Manikyma

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ABBREVIATIONS

ABCFM- The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions

AD- Anno Domini

BJP- Bharatiya Janata Party

HIV/AIDS- human immunodeficiency virus/ acquired immunodeficiency syndrome

MANAS- Mental Health and Normalcy Augmentation System

NGO- Non Governmental Organization

NIMHANS- The National institute of mental health and Neuro science

OPD- Outpatient Department

PHC- primary healthcare centres

RSS- Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh

US- United States

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction to lay counselling and its significance in the Indian context

The purpose of this dissertation is an attempt to formulate a model program for equipping the laypeople for lay counseling ministry in Thane. It is my personal conviction that the goal of training lay men and women for Christian counseling ministry is vital in the life and ministry of any church, especially growing churches, in winning and building up believers in their new- found faith. The equipping process helps us to build strong churches that can produce healthy churches in turns and quicken the multiplication of winnable believers. Moreover, the church's primary goal is ministry, not administration. Unfortunately, pastors are involved in administration. They are involved various ceremonial functions (Christian rituals, priestly practices, and other secondary functions of ministry) rather than biblical teaching, equipping, providing support, address the real issues of Christians daily lives. Lay Counseling to the hurting members of the families in many of our churches in order to fulfil the Great Commission of our Lord and to build a healthy redemptive worshipping community there is a need to change the present mode of ministry.

Every local church should ask important questions like "How can we best prepare lay members with the skills they desire and require, and how will we train them to be disciples, leaders, teachers, and servants?" The key question is, "What should be the main focus of the local church?" Kenneth Van Wyk, suggests that to organize a church for lay

training, it must first identify the essential areas of ministry, both within the church and in the surrounding community. By addressing these questions and determining priority areas, churches can effectively equip lay members for meaningful service and outreach. He states:

> Each church must individually determine what the answers are to that all important question. A church that does not determine its mission in the light of Scripture and in view of the needs of its community is not likely to grow. Nor will lay training be effective in a church that does not have its essential mission and purpose in sharp focus. The next step is to ascertain the kind of training needed to equip the lay-ministers to accomplish the predetermined objectives. The training program need not be elaborate; it only needs to be functional. It should be tailor-made to the needs and goals of the individual congregation. The church functions best when it helps its own members to discover their identity and role in the mission of their own local church. (Van Wyk 1979. 30-32)[1]

The Bible teaches that all Christians belong to the universal priesthood of believers (1 Pet 2:5,9). We are called to minister to each other so that we can all grow to maturity. The Pauline epistle to the Ephesians (4:12-16) contains the most significant single passage of scripture which directly relates to the issue of laity involvement in ministry, (See also 1 Pet 4: 10, 11.). God's call for us is to comfort people (Isa 40:1). Just before his resurrection Jesus said to his disciples "As the Father has sent me, even so I send you" (John 20:21). The same command is given to the present-day disciples. Jesus expects us to be involved in caring, helping, accepting, healing, comforting, assuring, confronting, being present and empowering, and interceding with God's people. Therefore, a foundational attempt is to promote a healthy and positive attitude toward Christian counseling and healing.

In developing a Model for Training Lay Leaders in Christian Counseling is aimed at providing basic insights into the theory and practice of ongoing care ministry within local churches, specifically for those without professional counseling training. The idea

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[1] Win Arn, *The Pastor's Church Growth Handbook* (Pasadena, CA (150 S. Los Robles, #600, Pasadena, CA 91101): Church Growth Press, Institute for American Church Growth, 1979), 21–33, http://archive.org/details/pastorschurchgro01arnw.

for this project stemmed from the writer's interactions with several local churches already utilizing lay counseling. These interactions highlighted the increasing necessity for pastors to receive support from lay individuals in providing care.

Additionally, it is important to notice a significant amount of literature on lay counseling programs in both secular and Christian contexts in the West, which is lacking in India. This scarcity of resources emphasizes the importance of developing a program tailored to the Indian context specifically for the city of Thane. The aim of this research is to bridge this gap by creating accessible materials and training opportunities for lay leaders in Christian counseling. By empowering lay members with the necessary knowledge and skills, churches can better meet the growing need for pastoral care within their communities.

1.2 Definition and scope of lay counseling

Dr. Gary Collins described Lay Counselors as individuals who may lack the training, education, experience, or credentials to be professional counsellors but nevertheless are actively involved in helping people cope with personal and relational problem.[2] Lay counseling is a form of counseling provided by trained individuals who are not licensed mental health professionals. Lay counselors offer compassionate support, active listening, and guidance to individuals facing various challenges. This approach has been successfully implemented in different parts of the western world, empowering lay individuals within the church to serve as a vital resource for emotional and mental support.

However, the concept of lay counseling ministry is relatively new in Thane, and its potential benefits and challenges in the local context have not been extensively

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[2] Siang-Yang Tan, *Lay Counselling: Equipping Christians for a helping Ministry* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2016), 15.

explored. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the feasibility and effectiveness of introducing a lay counseling ministry through churches in Thane, India. By examining the existing literature on lay counseling, understanding the cultural and religious context of Thane, and assessing the current state of counseling services in the city, this study seeks to provide insights into the potential impact of lay counseling ministry. It will explore how churches can play a role in addressing mental health needs, reducing stigma, and providing accessible and culturally sensitive counseling support to the diverse population of Thane. Ultimately, the findings of this study can contribute to the development of effective strategies for integrating lay counseling ministry within churches in Thane and serve as a foundation for future research and practical implementation in similar urban contexts.

1.3 Overview of the mental health landscape in India, with emphasis on Thane

The National Mental Health Survey looked at issues such as mental morbidity, which is physical and psychological deterioration resulting from a psychological condition. It also looked at neurosis and stress disorders. Alarmingly, the survey concluded that 1% of the sample size is at high risk of suicide. In 2017, a survey of mental health in India by the Lancet medical journal showed that diagnoses of psychological disorders doubled from 1990 to 2017 in India.[3]

In India, mental health disorders often remain hidden, as there is a lack of education and awareness concerning psychological disorders. "Many children and young people experience mental health problems in India. Yet social stigmas and negative attitudes toward mental health prevent young people from seeking the support they

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[3] Deutsche Welle, "India Fails to Address Growing Mental Health Problem," Hindustan Times, October 29, 2022, https://www.hindustantimes.com/lifestyle/health/india-fails-to-address-growing-mental-health-problem-101667038300362.html.

need."[4] Although public stigma universally prevents people who experience mental health problems (i.e. symptoms that are not sufficient to warrant a diagnosis of a mental disorder) and those with mental disorders from seeking counselling and treatment, the extent and manifestations of such stigma varies across Indian cultures. Public stigma is defined as interrelated "problems of knowledge (ignorance), problems of attitudes (prejudice), and problems of behavior (discrimination)."[5] After the Pandemic, the stigma around Mental Health is now faded as the new generation is more inclined to normalizing mental health issues and to seek professional help. The narrative surrounding mental health in India is undergoing a positive change. Millennials and Gen-Zs are now comfortable talking about their issues, going for therapy, and even sharing memes to normalize it further.[6] According to the recent report from the Times of India newspaper, "In Thane the Covid pandemic has brought about awareness about mental health issues to such an extent that more people from before are seeking professional help."[7] Face-to-face consultations for mental health witnessed a 44% increase year after year. According to the data shared by healthcare company Practo, the samples were younger – 57%, were in the 24-34 age group and male (61%). Online queries too saw a rise with most questions about substance abuse, anxiety, and depression in the last year. Delhi had the highest queries 20%, followed by Thane 10%.[8]

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[4] "India Fails to Address Growing Mental Health Problem."

[5] Shivani Mathur Gaiha et al., "Stigma Associated with Mental Health Problems among Young People in India: A Systematic Review of Magnitude, Manifestations and Recommendations," *BMC Psychiatry* 20 (November 16, 2020): 538, https://doi.org/10.1186/s12888-020-02937-x.

[6] Abigail Banerji, "Mental Health and Therapy Is No Longer a Taboo Subject for the Indian Youth," Hindustan Times, April 1, 2022, https://www.hindustantimes.com/lifestyle/relationships/mental-health-and-therapy-is-no-longer-a-taboo-subject-for-the-indian-youth-101648834442659.html.

[7] "Covid: Post Covid, More People Seek Help For Mental Health | Mumbai News - Times of India," accessed February 27, 2024, https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/mumbai/post-covid-more-people-seek-help-for-mental-health/articleshow/94733688.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst.

[8] "Covid: Post Covid, More People Seek Help For Mental Health | Mumbai News - Times of India."

In India, there is only 1 psychiatrist for every 400,000 people, according to the Indian government.[9] The scandal of mental health care in developing countries has been well documented, and it is difficult to imagine the solution is straightforward. One could think that these countries just need to train more psychiatrists and mental health professionals of the type you would find in the US. That, however is too simplistic. Yes, training more mental health specialists will be part of the answer for these nations. What is most interesting is that developing countries have also figured out a new way to tackle the deficit in mental health care. Specifically, these nations have been serving as a proving ground for a model called "community-based care," where non-specialist providers or lightly trained laypeople picture someone like a grandmother figure rather than a doctor who delivers brief mental health interventions in informal settings like homes or parks.[10]

The Lancet study involved about 2,600 people in the state of Goa, India with common mental illnesses such as anxiety or depression. About one half were assigned case managers who had taken a two-month training course in mental health counseling. All the patients in the study received whatever routine care was provided by private doctors or public clinics. Half of them had 6 to 12 meetings with the lay therapists. The therapists talked with them about their illnesses and problems, taught them coping mechanisms such as breathing exercises, and in some cases offered psychotherapy. In public health clinics, 66 percent of people who talked to lay therapists recovered after six months, compared to 43 percent of people who received the standard care. The researchers call this "modest evidence of a beneficial effect" of using lay counselors.[11]

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[9] Joanne Silberner, "Lay Therapists In India Can Make A Difference In Mental Illness," *NPR*, December 13, 2010, sec. Public Health, https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2010/12/14/132031411/lay-therapists-in-india-can-make-a-difference-in-mental-illness.

[10] Sigal Samuel, "Poor Countries Are Developing a New Paradigm of Mental Health Care. America Is Taking Note.," Vox, November 14, 2022, https://www.vox.com/the-highlight/23402638/mental-health-psychiatrist-shortage-community-care-africa.

[11] Silberner, "Lay Therapists In India Can Make A Difference In Mental Illness."

The approach, however, is not perfect. It turns out that lay therapists are better at treating anxiety than depression. At private clinics, where the standard of care was presumably higher to begin with, having a lay therapist around did not help much.[12] Still, experts in the field say the approach suggests a new way to reduce the global burden of mental illness. The lead author of the study, Vikram Patel of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, said the hope is that Non-Governmental organizations (NGOs) and governments will consider the model as "an affordable and feasible framework" for improving standard primary health care.[13]

Though there is much happening in the secular world, India is still lacking in one major approach: Christian Lay counseling. In the western world, specifically in America we, can see that Christian Lay Counseling ministry is very effective in people's lives.

We live in a fallen world that is tainted by the effects of sin. Despite the psychological sophistication of our modern society, we continue to experience brokenness in our lives. Things are not getting better. Our congregations and Christian institutions are full of hurting people who are struggling. They need help, but they often find it difficult to open and share their burdens. Most of the time they have no one available to listen and to care for them. Sometimes, their Christian beliefs or misbeliefs have brought guilt and shame.[14] For them, the Lay Christian Counseling strives not only to help the individual overcome their mental health challenges, but also to help them heal spiritually. Through Christian Lay counseling, persons may feel empowered to strengthen their relationship and communication with God, and to address their challenges through a biblical lens.[15] The researcher's hope and purpose of this study is to make this a tool for

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[12] Silberner "Lay Therapists."

[13] Silberner "Lay Therapists."

[14] Siang-Yang Tan, Eric T. Scalise, and Tim Clinton, *Lay Counseling, Revised and Updated: Equipping Christians for a Helping Ministry*, Revised edition (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2016), 19.

[15] "A Guide To Becoming a Christian Counselor," GCU, December 1, 2022, https://www.gcu.edu/blog/psychology-counseling/guide-becoming-christian-counselor.

reaching out to people who are Christ-believers and also unreached persons affected with mental illness in Thane, India.

1.4 Problem Statement

The purpose of this study is to explore how Christian Lay Counseling can be an objective of social transformation. The Christian Lay Counseling has been studied so far mostly from perspectives of predominantly Christian and economically developed societies. The research is that in Lay counseling the social is not merely a context for the personal, but that social transformation itself is a valid and necessary objective. The situation of a predominantly non-Christian and developing country like India specifically the city of Thane is used as the context to argue for and illustrate the research. In so doing, this study is also intended as a contribution towards inculturation lay counseling in the Indian situation, and expanding the understanding and practice of lay counseling in the traditionally Christian countries of the West.

1.5 Research Questions

What are the cultural and contextual factors influencing the effectiveness of Christian lay counseling within the diverse communities of Thane, Maharashtra, India?

How do perceptions of mental health and counseling within the Christian community in Thane impact the adoption and utilization of lay counseling services?

What are the challenges faced by Christian lay counseling leaders in Thane?

What strategies can be developed to equip lay counseling leaders for ministry growth and social transformation in Thane?

What are the theological foundations and frameworks guiding Christian lay counseling practices in Thane, and how do they align with the cultural and social context of the region?

1.6 Objectives of the Study

According to the World Health Organization, around 450 million people worldwide struggle with mental health issues, 75% of them residing in developing nations where access to treatment is limited. Unfortunately, mental health problems often go unnoticed or untreated in these areas due to a focus on other pressing issues like poverty and community development. [16] In many developing countries, there's a significant stigma surrounding mental illness, leading sufferers to face isolation and shame within their families and communities. Counseling and treatment services are scarce, making it even more challenging for people to seek help. [17]

India, despite being a secular, democratic republic, faces challenges due to its diverse cultural, linguistic, and religious landscape. Recent years have seen a rise in inter-religious tensions. Hindus form the largest religious group, comprising 80.5% of the population, approximately 827,578,868 individuals. Muslims make up 13.4% of the population, around 138,188,240 people. Other minority religions include Christians (2.3%) and Sikhs (1.9%), while the remainder identify as "other." [18]

Despite residing closely, different religious groups in India can influence various psychosocial issues, potentially affecting mental health treatment. Historically, counseling has overlooked the influence of cultural values. The assumption that a universal approach in psychotherapy fits all, irrespective of factors like race, gender, ethnicity, or socio-economic status, is likely inaccurate. As the world becomes more interconnected through technology and globalization, cultural differences persist. It is crucial to acknowledge and address these differences to ensure effective and culturally sensitive mental health treatment. This recognition is especially pertinent in a diverse

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[16] David Carson and Aparajita Chowdhury, "The Potential Impact of Family Life Education and Lay Counselor Training on Poverty in Developing Countries: The Example of India (The International Journal of Community Development)" 6 (June 9, 2018): 8, https://doi.org/10.11634/233028791503926.

[17] Carson and Chowdhury, "The Potential Impact," 9.

[18] Ashlee M Beck, "Help-Seeking Attitudes in India: The Role of Religion, Intergroup Anxiety, Collective Self-Esteem, & Emotional Intelligence," n.d., 1.

country like India, where various cultural and religious backgrounds shape individuals' perspectives and experiences.[19]

In cultural and economic contexts such as those found in India, the practice of seeking counseling or therapy is relatively new. There is a cultural taboo against discussing family issues or reaching out to professionals for assistance. Instead, individuals often turn to older family members or religious leaders for guidance, which may not always be effective.[20] In India, people face various personal and relational challenges that are common worldwide. These issues encompass family conflicts due to factors like inter-caste marriages, dowry disputes, and disagreements with in-laws. Communication problems within marriages and families, as well as sexual issues, are also prevalent.[21]

The World Health Organization emphasizes promoting mental health in resource-limited countries by strengthening families and communities, creating supportive environments, developing personal skills, providing early childhood development services, and empowering women. These strategies aim to address mental health challenges within the context of broader community development efforts.[22]

The relationship among mental illness, addictions, lost work productivity, and quality of life in India. Improvement in population health is only possible if developing countries, including India, make the prevention and treatment of mental disorders and substance use disorders a public health priority.[23]

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[19] Beck, " Help-Seeking," 2.

[20] Carson and Chowdhury, "The Potential Impact of Family Life Education and Lay Counselor Training on Poverty in Developing Countries," 9.

[21] Ashish Srivastava, "Marriage as a Perceived Panacea to Mental Illness in India: Reality Check," *Indian Journal of Psychiatry* 55, no. Suppl 2 (January 2013): S239–42, https://doi.org/10.4103/0019-5545.105542.

[22] Carson and Chowdhury, "The Potential Impact of Family Life Education and Lay Counselor Training on Poverty in Developing Countries," 9.

[23] Carson and Chowdhury, The Potential Impact," 10.

Children and adolescents in low-income countries are particularly vulnerable to mental health issues, with estimates suggesting that up to 90% of those affected globally come from these areas. Natural disasters and health emergencies can worsen mental health problems for families in impoverished environments, but relief efforts often do not prioritize mental health support.[24] Other concerns include disagreements over child-rearing and the perception of husbands not being involved enough in domestic matters. Parents often have high expectations for their children, especially regarding academic and career success. Child abuse and domestic violence are significant issues, along with conflicts between different generations, particularly between mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law. Adolescent conduct disorders, suicide, and substance abuse further contribute to the mental health challenges faced by individuals and families in India. Addressing these issues requires comprehensive strategies that prioritize communication, support systems, and mental health services tailored to the cultural context and societal dynamics prevalent in the country.[25]

The traditional joint family system, especially in urban areas, is gradually weakening, leading to a loss of the elderly's role and function within families. Mental health issues are also widespread, with conditions such as depression, anxiety, and stress-related disorders being linked to physical illness, disability, and HIV/AIDS. Mental illness is indeed a very complex and multi-faceted one.[26] Besides each influencing the outcome of the other, the matter also has legal and moral dimensions associated with it. Which will be explained in Literature review.

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[24] Carson and Chowdhury, The Potential Impact" 9.

[25] Devika Mehra et al., "Mental Health Interventions among Adolescents in India: A Scoping Review," *Healthcare* 10, no. 2 (February 10, 2022): 337, https://doi.org/10.3390/healthcare10020337.

[26] Srivastava, "Marriage as a Perceived Panacea to Mental Illness in India."

1.7 Scope and Limitations

India has long been celebrated as a place of diverse religions and spirituality, where major religions have coexisted peacefully for centuries, fostering an environment of mutual respect and tolerance. This reputation has earned India respect and admiration globally. However, in modern times, India is experiencing unprecedented levels of inter-religious rivalry and conflict, a departure from its historical harmony.[27]

Hindu leaders and organizations claim that Christians are involved in forced conversion activities as part of an international conspiracy to target Hindus in India. As a result, they demand a legal ban on conversions. Conversely, Christians argue that they are victims of the communal politics of Hindu nationalist forces currently in power. However, it is a fact that Christian missionary activities in India have long faced opposition from Hindu groups, mainly due to aggressive evangelism and conversion programs.[28]

In recent times, there has been a shift in the attitude of slum dwellers towards Christian mission work. The state government's anti-conversion bill has tarnished the reputation of Christian missions, leading more people to view their social work as a guise for conversion efforts. Hindu fundamentalists' false accusations have also played a role in shaping perceptions in slum communities.[29]

As a result, Christian workers now face suspicion, accusations, and alienation, despite their sacrifices and numerous developmental efforts. This hostile environment poses significant challenges to the continuation of Christian mission work in India, impacting both the perception of their activities and their ability to carry out their

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[27] Mathew Thomas, "Christian Missions in the Pluralistic Context of India – The Relevance of Gandhian Approach" (Mahatma Gandhi University, 2002), 1, https://mgutheses.in/png/T%201599/T%201599.pdf.

[28] Thomas, "Christian Missions," 279.

[29] Paul Sreenivas, "CHRISTIAN MISSION TO SLUMS IN INDIA," 2, accessed February 28, 2024, https://www.academia.edu/6448477/CHRISTIAN_MISSION_TO_SLUMS_IN_INDIA.

humanitarian work effectively.[30] This makes it more challenging for Christian Ministries in India.

1.8 Conclusion

This research is an exploration into the evolving landscape of mental health and societal dynamics in India, with a particular focus on Thane. The dissertation examine the influence of various religions and cultures on these changes, particularly emphasizing the growing significance of lay counseling, where individuals without professional training provide support to others.

There are absorbable tensions arising in India, particularly surrounding issues like forced conversions and religious politics, which pose challenges for Christian communities and lay counseling initiatives. It becomes evident that lay counseling leaders within these communities require enhanced training to effectively navigate these complexities.

Moreover, researcher highlight the scarcity of resources and information concerning lay counseling in India, underscoring the need for tailored strategies to support individuals with mental health issues, taking into account their cultural and religious backgrounds. Ultimately, this dissertation will underscores the importance of collaboration among churches, mental health professionals, and community leaders to establish effective lay counseling programs.

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[30] Sreenivas, "Christian," 136.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter explores the relevant literature surrounding lay Christian counseling within the cultural and religious/spiritual context, establishing the groundwork for the present study. It commences with an exploration of cultural values and identity, followed by an examination of the impact of urban culture on mental health, particularly focusing on Thane City. Furthermore, it scrutinizes the intricate relationship between religion/spirituality and culture. The chapter also elucidates the influence of informal support systems, culminating in a comprehensive review of lay counseling as a service model and its application within churches in Thane City.

Initially, a historical overview of Thane City is provided, followed by an analysis of its population demographics, educational landscape, and religious composition. Emphasis is placed on understanding the cultural milieu of Thane City and its implications for mental health. The chapter then delves into the specific mental health challenges faced by the residents of Thane City, with a keen eye on religious and cultural barriers to accessing treatment.

Moreover, the chapter scrutinizes lay counseling within the Indian context, elucidating its significance and scope. It explores the dynamics of church-based lay counseling, highlighting the challenges encountered within Christian ministry in Thane. The literature review also encompasses various models proposed for equipping lay Christian counseling leaders, including the selection process, training modules, supervision protocols, and ethical considerations.

In essence, this chapter offers a comprehensive synthesis of existing literature, providing a nuanced understanding of lay counseling within the cultural and religious landscape of Thane City. It sets the stage for the subsequent chapters, which will delve into the empirical investigation of religious, cultural, and economic challenges impacting lay counseling, alongside the proposal of a model for equipping Christian lay counseling leaders within the specified context.

2.1 Brief history of Thane city

Thane city has a rich historical legacy dating back to the 9th century AD when it was known as Shreesthanak[31], later becoming renowned as the capital of the Shilahar dynasty. The history of Thane can be segmented into five significant epochs. Firstly, from the Vedic period to 1300 AD, encompassing Hindu antiquity, Aparant, and the reigns of the Shilahar and Bimba dynasties. Following this, the period between 1300 and 1660 AD witnessed Mohamedan and Portuguese dominion. From 1660 to 1800 AD, Thane experienced governance under both Maratha and Portuguese authorities. Subsequently, from 1800 to 1947 AD, British colonial rule prevailed.[32] On the 16th of April, 1853, the inaugural railway line in India commenced its journey from Boribunder to Thane, marking a significant historical milestone for the city of Thane. Additionally, Thane had the distinction of hosting a momentous event on the 15th of August, 1947, which marked India's first Independence Day. This occasion was commemorated in Thane with the lowering of the British Union Jack and the raising of the tricolor flag of India, an act performed by the esteemed freedom fighter Shri Nanasaheb Joshi at the District Collector's Office.[33]

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[31] Fleur D'Souza, *Of Polo, Pirates and the Portuguese: Glimpses of Thane's Maritime Past* (Maritime History Society, 2013), 11.

[32] "About Thane – Welcome to Thane Smart City," accessed April 10, 2024, https://thanesmartcity.in/about-thane/.

[33] "About Thane – Welcome to Thane Smart City."

2.2 Emergence and Expansion of Christianity

Christianity also found its way to India long before it arrived in Europe. Christians in the coastal region, particularly Maharashtra, maintain that the introduction of the gospel to western India occurred through Bartholomew, one of Jesus' disciples, although historical evidence supporting this claim is lacking. Nonetheless, the Christian presence can be traced back to the sixth century.[34] Cosmas Indico-pleustes, a Greek merchant, reported encountering a church in Kalliana (present-day Kalyan, near Bombay/Mumbai) in 545, with a bishop consecrated from Persia. When Jordan of Severac, a French Dominican priest, arrived in Thane in 1321, he discovered Nestorian Christians who had settled there, as well as in Kalyan, Sopara, and Broach (Bharuch in Gujarat), since the seventh century. Thus, it is evident that Christianity had established itself in the West of India long before the arrival of the Portuguese or the British.[35]

The arrival of Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama on the shores of Calicut (present-day Kozhikode) in 1498 not only established a new trade route from Europe to India but also initiated a new era of Roman Catholic mission in India. During the reign of the Portuguese kings, Christianization became a state-led endeavor, resulting in the establishment of churches wherever the empire expanded. The entire western coast, spanning from Diu and Daman in Gujarat to Goa in the south, fell under Portuguese dominion. By the time Francis Xavier arrived in India in 1542, the Jesuits had actively propagated Christianity in Goa, Bassein, Salsette, and Bombay, leading to the conversion of many under the colonial power's patronage. Most converts assimilated into Portuguese customs and practices.

Protestant missions in West India emerged relatively later, partly due to the initial hostility of the East India Company toward missionary activities. However, with the

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[34] D'Souza, *Of Polo, Pirates and the Portuguese*, 10.

[35] Kenneth R. Ross, Daniel Jeyaraj, and Todd M. Johnson, *Christianity in South and Central Asia*, Edinburgh Companions to Global Christianity (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019), 132.

relaxation of restrictions on missionary work following the renewal of the Company's charter in 1813, Protestant missions gained momentum. The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM), founded in 1810, became the first organization to capitalize on the newfound opportunity for Protestant missionary work in India. Subsequently, various Protestant missions, including the American Presbyterian Mission and the Methodist Episcopal Church, commenced their endeavors in Maharashtra, contributing significantly to the spread of Christianity in the region. The missionary efforts focused on establishing schools, hospitals, vocational institutes, and farm colonies, aiming at holistic transformation and social upliftment. These missions also played a pivotal role in challenging social evils, such as untouchability, and fostering socio-religious reform and modernization in Maharashtra and beyond.[36]

2.3 Population

Determining the precise population of the country poses a challenge as India has not undertaken a census since 2011 due to the surge of covid 19 pandemic.[37] However, estimates suggest that the population exceeds 1.4 billion individuals, surpassing the combined populations of Europe (744 million) and the Americas (1.04 billion). [38] According to the 2011 census, the population of Maharashtra, India was documented as 112,372,972. Maharashtra stands as the second most populous state in the country, accounting for approximately 9.29% of the total population. Comparatively, in the 2001 census, the population was 96,878,627, reflecting an increase of 154,943,345 during the

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[36] Ross, Jeyaraj, and Johnson, 132–36.

[37] "News | Government of India," accessed April 10, 2024, https://censusindia.gov.in/census.website/news.

[38] Laura Silver, Christine Huang, and Laura Clancy, "Key Facts as India Surpasses China as the World's Most Populous Country," *Pew Research Center* (blog), accessed April 10, 2024, https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2023/02/09/key-facts-as-india-surpasses-china-as-the-worlds-most-populous-country/.

decade from 2001 to 2011.[39] Among the cities in Maharashtra, Thane city is one of the Municipal Corporation in Thane district. The Thane city is divided into 116 wards for which elections are held every 5 years. The Thane Municipal Corporation has population of 1,841,488 of which 975,399 are males while 866,089 are females as per report released by Census India 2011. Within Thane Municipal Corporation, children aged 0-6 make up 11.40% of the total population, totalling 209,879. The Female Sex Ratio stands at 888, slightly lower than the state average of 929, while the Child Sex Ratio in Thane is approximately 908, surpassing the Maharashtra state average of 894. The Thane Municipal Corporation manages the basic amenities for 435,341 households, including water and sewerage services, and is responsible for constructing roads within its jurisdiction while levying property taxes. As of 2024, the estimated population of Thane Municipal Corporation is around 2,613,000. The scheduled census for 2021 in Thane was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, with expectations for the new population census to be conducted in 2024. All figures from 2011 are accurate, while the current data for Thane town is based on estimations.[40]

2.4 Education

The estimated population of Thane Municipal Corporation in 2024 remains undisclosed. However, predictions based on current data suggest that Thane city exhibits a notably higher literacy rate compared to the state average, standing at 89.41%, with male literacy at 92.14% and female literacy at 86.33%.[41] According to the 2011 census, Maharashtra boasts a total of 825,122,225 literate individuals, comprising 462,940,041 males and 362,811,184 females. Excluding children under seven years old, the state's

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[39] "Census of Maharashtra, India" (Government of India, office of the registrar general and the commissioner, 2011), 24.

[40] "Thane Municipal Corporation City Population Census 2011-2024 | Maharashtra," accessed March 7, 2024, https://www.census2011.co.in/data/town/802787-thane-maharashtra.html.

[41] "Thane Municipal Corporation City Population Census 2011-2024 | Maharashtra."

illiterate population totals 170,123,372, with 52,450,094 males and 117,672,278 females. Thane records the highest number of illiterates, amounting to 13,541,116. Provisional data from 2011 suggests a literacy rate of 82.91%. District-wise analysis positions Thane City as the 6th most literate district between the 2001 and 2011 censuses.[42]

2.5 Religion

The demographic distribution in Thane reflects a diverse religious landscape, with Hinduism constituting the majority at 73.91%. Muslims comprise a significant portion at 17.96%, followed by Christians at 1.88%, Sikhs at 0.32%, and Buddhists at 4.18%. Additionally, the Jain community represents 1.40% of the population, while individuals identifying with other faiths constitute 0.11%. A small percentage, 0.24%, claim no religious affiliation.[43] This data underscores the multicultural fabric of Thane, where various religious traditions coexist harmoniously, contributing to the city's rich tapestry of cultural diversity and pluralism.

2.6 Thane City and its Culture

Thane, situated in western Maharashtra, India, lies at the confluence of the Thana River and the Ulhas estuary, northeast of Mumbai. Affectionately referred to as the "City of Lakes," it has approximately 30 picturesque lakes within its precincts. While predominantly serving as a residential suburb of Mumbai, Thane hosts a sizable industrial sector, encompassing chemical, engineering, and textile industries, alongside serving as the divisional headquarters for the state road-transport service. Noteworthy landmarks within the city include an historic Ghodbunder Fort, Christian churches, and numerous architectural structures. The surrounding terrain is characterized by undulating hills, with

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[42] "Census of Maharashtra, India," 36.
[43] "Thane Municipal Corporation City Population Census 2011-2024 | Maharashtra."

sporadic spurs of the Western Ghats stretching towards the Arabian Sea. This region experiences the full force of the southwest monsoon during summers, resulting in reliable and copious rainfall. Primarily an agricultural area catering to Mumbai, Thane cultivates key crops such as rice, millet, as well as a variety of fruits and vegetables.[44]

Thane is immersed in Maharashtrian culture but also embraces a variety of ethnicities from across India. While Marathis form the majority, the city is renowned for its vibrant Jain community. Its ongoing development and enhanced quality of life have drawn a multitude of migrants, transforming it into a culturally diverse metropolis. Regarded as a second home by many Mumbai residents, Thane offers an array of amenities catering to modern lifestyles, attracting students in large numbers. Despite its modernization, Thane remains steadfast in preserving its cultural ethos and rich heritage, making it a captivating blend of tradition and progress.[45]

2.7 Thane City Mental health

Dr. Netaji Mulik hospital superintendent said in his interview with The Times of India newspaper that OPD visitors at the regional mental health hospital in Thane shot up to 50,524 in 2023from 20,144 in 2019, a 2.5-fold increase. "The rise could be attributed to the impact of the pandemic as a sizable number of these patients were affected by job loss of failure to maintain their previous lifestyle."[46]

In the above-mentioned article, it is mentioned that, medical professionals at the facility noted that prevalent mental health issues include neurosis, anxiety, and depression. Dr. Sandeep Divekar, a psychiatrist overseeing the outpatient department,

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[44] "Thane | India, Map, Population, & Fact | Britannica," February 29, 2024, https://www.britannica.com/place/Thane-India.

[45] Reema Sharma, "Diversity of Thane," *Medium* (blog), November 23, 2018, https://medium.com/@reemasharma/diversity-of-thane-b090caffcb44.

[46] "OPD Patients at Thane Mental Hosp up 2.5-Fold," *The Times of India*, January 29, 2024, https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/thane/opd-patients-at-thane-mental-hosp-up-25fold-news-article/articleshow/107216773.cms.

emphasized the scarcity of outlets for psychological relief. He cited instances such as a young Bollywood dance director, whose family overlooked his increasing withdrawal after his mentor's demise. Another case involved a teenager who spiralled into depression and made a suicide attempt due to academic pressure. These anecdotes underscore the importance of addressing mental health concerns and the need for accessible support systems in society.[47]

Dr. Swapnil Lale, assistant director of health services in his Interview with Hindustan Times newspaper, announced a strategic enhancement of mental health services in the state through a comprehensive three-tiered approach. This initiative entails bolstering mental health provisions at district hospitals, equipping MBBS doctors at primary healthcare centres (PHCs) with psychiatric evaluation skills, and offering free mental health services via tele-MANAS (Mental Health and Normalcy Augmentation System[48]). Across all 36 district hospitals, dedicated mental health teams have been established, comprising psychiatrists, social workers, clinical psychologists, and psychiatric nurses. These teams are tasked with conducting outreach services across various community health centres, rural hospitals, and sub-district hospitals, ensuring widespread access to mental health support. Dr. Lale highlighted the importance of these measures in addressing mental health needs at the grassroots level and promoting holistic well-being across communities.[49]

Dr. Lale revealed plans for the renovation of the mental hospital in Thane, which will boast 3000 beds and be modeled after NIMHANS (The National institute of mental

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[47] "OPD Patients at Thane Mental Hosp up 2.5-Fold."

[48] "MANAS Mitra: Empowering Mental Well-Being - PM-STIAC Initiative," accessed March 7, 2024, https://www.psa.gov.in/manas-mitra.

[49] "Data Shows Rise in Mental Health Related Deaths in the State," Hindustan Times, November 16, 2023, https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/mumbai-news/data-shows-rise-in-mental-health-related-deaths-in-the-state-101700135303382.html.

health and Neuro science [50]). Additionally, an academic block will be established, facilitating the introduction of an MPhil course in clinical psychology. This academic facility will serve as a resource for psychiatric departments across the five medical colleges in Mumbai. Currently, Maharashtra hosts four mental hospitals, with Thane being the second largest, accommodating 1850 beds, divided into 1,050 for men and 800 for women. These hospitals, dating back to the pre-independence era, are undergoing renovation, with an estimated completion timeframe of 4-5 years. Dr. Lale emphasized the significance of these initiatives in enhancing mental health infrastructure and academic opportunities in the region. [51] Despite the commendable efforts by the Maharashtra Government, a lingering question persists: will the invasion of mainstream mental health professionals be sufficient to address the escalating mental health challenges in Thane City?

2.8 Religious and Cultural Barriers for Mental health Treatment in Thane City

In India, cultural barriers pose significant hurdles to seeking therapy for mental health issues. Mental health is often misunderstood, with families fearing that acknowledging such problems could tarnish their reputation.[52] Traditional Indian values are shared by many Asian cultures, emphasizing collectivism over individualism. Sacrifice for the family, such as investing in a family member's education or arranged marriages, is commonplace. Family holds utmost importance, with clearly defined roles for each relationship, characterized by hierarchical structures and reverence for elders and males. Families serve as primary sources of emotional, social, and financial support,

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[50] "National Institute of Mental Health & Neurosciences," accessed March 7, 2024, https://nimhans.co.in/.

[51] "Data Shows Rise in Mental Health Related Deaths in the State."

[52] "Cultural Barriers to Seeking Counselling in India," Live Love Laugh, accessed March 7, 2024, https://www.thelivelovelaughfoundation.org/blog/self-care-support/cultural-barriers-to-seeking-counselling-in-india.

fostering interdependence and inhibiting self-identity. The traditional Indian family is hierarchical, patriarchal, and patrilineal, rewarding conservative values over competitiveness or self-orientation. However, these values may conflict with the pursuit of occupational and educational success, challenging notions of independence and self-identity.[53] This deep-rooted stigma associated with mental illness discourages individuals from seeking outside help, as they fear being judged as weak or flawed by society. Furthermore, within Indian culture, mental health issues are frequently attributed to individual behavior or external influences rather than recognized as medical conditions requiring professional intervention. This blame culture and lack of understanding exacerbate the reluctance to seek therapy.[54]

Approximately 80% of India's population identifies as Hindu, and regardless of religious affiliation, most Indians share beliefs in fatalism and animism. Psychological distress and disorders are commonly understood within a religious framework, often attributed to spirit possessions or the violation of moral or religious principles. Indians typically perceive the mind and body holistically, linking psychological issues to moral or religious transgressions, or spirit possessions. Both physical and mental health challenges are frequently viewed as predetermined by divine will or past karma, fostering a fatalistic perspective. Additionally, there's a belief that behavioural abnormalities may result from curses or hexes cast by others. These cultural beliefs often hinder individuals from seeking professional assistance promptly.[55] Which leads them to seek treatment from spiritual advisors or folk doctors instead of seeking appropriate medical care. Moreover, the strong emphasis on interdependence within Indian families often leads

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[53] Segal, U. A. The Asian Indian-American family. In Charles H. Mindel, Robert W. Habenstein, and Roosevelt H. Wright Jr, *Ethnic Families in America: Patterns and Variations*, 4th edition (Upper Saddle River , NJ: Pearson, 1997), 302–23.

[54] "Cultural Barriers to Seeking Counselling in India."

[55] Margaret M. Conrad and Dula F. Pacquiao, "Manifestation, Attribution, and Coping With Depression Among Asian Indians From the Perspectives of Health Care Practitioners," *Journal of Transcultural Nursing* 16, no. 1 (January 1, 2005): 32–40, https://doi.org/10.1177/1043659604271239.

individuals to consult older family members for guidance, rather than seeking therapy outside the family. This cultural norm, combined with a lack of awareness about the nature and treatment of mental health disorders, further complicates the issue, as many believe these conditions can be resolved through family advice alone. However, it is essential to recognize that addressing mental health concerns requires clinical intervention and supportive family networks.[56]

In Indian households, infants are often pampered, while young children grow up in a strict, authoritarian environment where independence is not encouraged. Adolescence is not commonly acknowledged as a distinct stage, and parents typically use shame, guilt, and moral obligations to control their children during this period. Families uphold high expectations for their children, leading those who underperform to develop feelings of failure and low self-esteem. Unfortunately, these children often do not receive assistance, as seeking help from outsiders is seen as shameful and weak. Similar to other Asian cultures, Asian Indians tend to keep family matters within their close-knit network and are hesitant to confide in non-family members, especially regarding taboo topics. Family secrets are kept confidential and not shared with outsiders. Many Indians may avoid direct eye contact with authority figures and elders as a sign of respect, while women typically avoid eye contact with men.[57]

To overcome cultural and religious obstacles and enhance mental health outcomes in India, it is crucial to increase awareness and education about mental health. This involves reducing the stigma surrounding mental illnesses and encouraging individuals to seek professional or para professional (Lay counselors) assistance. Furthermore, mental

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[56] "Cultural Barriers to Seeking Counselling in India."

[57] Segal, U. A. The Asian Indian-American family. In Mindel, Habenstein, and Jr, *Ethnic Families in America*, 302–23.

health services should be readily available and affordable nationwide, enabling individuals to access the support they need to address their mental health issues.[58]

2.9 Lay Counseling in an Indian Context.

Depression stands as the primary mental health issue, affecting approximately 4.7% of the global population. Its impact extends to diminishing quality of life, social interactions, and productivity, imposing a substantial economic burden estimated at US $1.15 trillion annually.[59] While certain psychological interventions have a proven efficacy comparable to antidepressant medications, accessibility remains a significant challenge, particularly in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). Reviews indicate a treatment gap exceeding 90% in countries like India and China, and even in well-resourced settings, often surpassing 50%.

The majority of evidence supporting psychological treatments originates from specialized settings in high-income countries, raising questions about its applicability to LMICs. Various contextual factors, including diverse explanatory models, coping mechanisms, limited access to specialist services, and socioeconomic disparities such as literacy, need to be taken into account.[60] Nevertheless, there is growing evidence for the effectiveness of culturally adapted psychological interventions delivered by trained lay health workers in primary care and community settings. Identifying such treatments has emerged as a top research priority in global mental health.

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[58] "Cultural Barriers to Seeking Counselling in India."

[59] Dan Chisholm et al., "Scaling-up Treatment of Depression and Anxiety: A Global Return on Investment Analysis," *The Lancet Psychiatry* 3, no. 5 (May 1, 2016): 415–24, https://doi.org/10.1016/S2215-0366(16)30024-4.

[60] Vikram Patel et al., "The Healthy Activity Program (HAP), a Lay Counsellor-Delivered Brief Psychological Treatment for Severe Depression, in Primary Care in India: A Randomised Controlled Trial," *The Lancet* 389, no. 10065 (January 14, 2017): 176–85, https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(16)31589-6.

According to a groundbreaking new research direction, which includes the involvement of CU Boulder, Sona Dimidjian associate professor in the Department of Psychology and Neuroscience, it is proposed that a cadre of trained "lay counsellors" could potentially offer a solution to the widespread treatment gap in global mental health. The novel utilization of new updated information and studies not only enhances accessibility and affordability but also empowers individuals by encouraging community members to play a more active role in caring for others within their community. This approach also fosters the democratization of mental health care. Integrating innovative mental health initiatives into primary care is practical, ensuring fairness and adopting a long-term perspective to achieve universal mental well-being.[61]

Renowned Indian psychiatrist Professor Vikram Patel has published two studies in The *Lancet Today*, offering persuasive evidence in favor of introducing lay counseling services in primary healthcare facilities across India, with a focus on combating depression and alcohol misuse. These randomized controlled trials, financed by the Wellcome Trust and conducted in Goa, India by the NGO Sangath in collaboration with the Government of Goa's Directorate of Health Services, demonstrate that lay counseling produces superior outcomes compared to enhanced care provided by primary care physicians for severe depression and harmful drinking. Additionally, the research indicates that this approach is cost-effective, making it a feasible option for investment and scaling up.[62]

Utilizing lay counselors, individuals without formal mental health training but equipped with somke intensive training, in delivering specialized counseling

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[61] Apurvakumar Pandya et al., "Innovative Mental Health Initiatives in India: A Scope for Strengthening Primary Healthcare Services," *Journal of Family Medicine and Primary Care* 9, no. 2 (February 28, 2020): 502–7, https://doi.org/10.4103/jfmpc.jfmpc_977_19.

[62] "Leading Psychiatrist Calls for Roll-out of Lay Counselling to Tackle Massive Burden of Harmful Drinking and Depression in India," Wellcome, December 16, 2016, https://wellcome.org/press-release/leading-psychiatrist-calls-roll-out-lay-counselling-tackle-massive-burden-harmful.

interventions and ongoing peer supervision for quality assurance, aims to tackle the shortage of mental health professionals in India. These treatment programs, developed in partnership with Professor Christopher Fairburn at the University of Oxford in the UK, are based on the same theoretical principles as evidence-based psychological treatments utilized by mental health professionals in high-income countries. [63] Integrating lay counseling in primary healthcare advances mental health care in India, focusing on depression and alcohol misuse. By training individuals without formal mental health background, it addresses the shortage of professionals. Collaborating with experts like Professor Christopher Fairburn ensures evidence-based practices. This approach emphasizes accessible, culturally sensitive support for diverse communities.

In New Delhi, India, a groundbreaking study conducted the largest assessment of a school-based intervention led by lay counselors, targeting common adolescent mental health issues. This trial stands as one of the most extensive investigations of a targeted, transdiagnostic mental health intervention for adolescents worldwide. The findings underscore the effectiveness of a brief problem-solving intervention in addressing self-reported psychosocial difficulties among adolescents with diverse mental health concerns. Moving forward, future research endeavors should focus on refining the low-intensity delivery format, possibly integrating digital methods to mitigate implementation costs associated with lay counselor involvement and to enhance acceptability compared to traditional bibliotherapy formats. Furthermore, there's a crucial need for future studies to evaluate problem-solving delivery within a more comprehensive and dynamic stepped care system, aiming to improve overall remission rates for mental health issues. This

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[63] "Leading Psychiatrist Calls for Roll-out of Lay Counselling to Tackle Massive Burden of Harmful Drinking and Depression in India."

approach would not only expand the reach of mental health interventions but also ensure a more holistic and effective approach to adolescent mental well-being.[64]

A qualitative assessment conducted as part of the MANAS trial in Goa, India, evaluated the effectiveness of a collaborative stepped-care intervention led by lay health counselors for common mental disorders (CMDs) in public primary health centers (PHCs). The evaluation examined various outcomes, including symptom relief, social functioning, and patient satisfaction with care. The intervention employed in this study offers a potential model for how trained lay counselors can support busy primary care physicians in the public sector by providing patient education, monitoring adherence, and assisting with behavioral and lifestyle changes to improve clinical outcomes. Conversely, in the private sector, training general practitioners in the detection, treatment, and management of common mental disorders may suffice to achieve similar outcomes.[65]

2.10 Church-Based Lay Counseling

Church-based lay counseling offers an accessible and spiritually-aligned avenue for individuals seeking affordable psychological support. According to Dr. Siang- Yang Tan, retired Psychology professor at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena California, lay counseling involves nonprofessional or paraprofessional counselors offering assistance, despite limited or no formal training in counseling skills. [66] These lay counselors lack the qualifications of professional therapists but nonetheless provide valuable support for individuals dealing with personal challenges. While some studies

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[64] Daniel Michelson et al., "Effectiveness of a Brief Lay Counsellor-Delivered, Problem-Solving Intervention for Adolescent Mental Health Problems in Urban, Low-Income Schools in India: A Randomised Controlled Trial," *The Lancet Child & Adolescent Health* 4, no. 8 (August 1, 2020): 571–82, https://doi.org/10.1016/S2352-4642(20)30173-5.

[65] Sachin Shinde et al., "The Impact of a Lay Counselor Led Collaborative Care Intervention for Common Mental Disorders in Public and Private Primary Care: A Qualitative Evaluation Nested in the MANAS Trial in Goa, India," *Social Science & Medicine (1982)* 88 (July 2013): 48–55, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2013.04.002.

[66] Tan, Scalise, and Clinton, *Lay Counseling, Revised and Updated*, 15–16.

criticize the effectiveness of lay counselors, several others indicate their efficacy to be on par with professional counseling. The authors of article called *Who (or what) can do psychotherapy: The status and challenge of nonprofessional therapies.* supports this, suggesting that paraprofessionals, self-administered, and mutual-support group treatments are generally comparable in effectiveness to professional therapies.[67]

In the realm of Christian lay counseling, it appears that lay counselors can be as effective as professional therapists in alleviating emotional and psychological distress and facilitating therapeutic progress. In the article called, *The evaluation of a church based lay counseling program: Some preliminary data,* discovered that individuals undergoing treatment in a church-based lay counseling initiative experienced notable reductions in complaints and symptoms from before to after counseling.[68] Similarly, in another article called *The effectiveness of church-based lay counselors: A controlled outcome study* it assessed the efficacy of lay counselors within a church-based program using random group assignment, revealing that participants in the treatment group demonstrated significant enhancements across various outcome measures compared to the control group. Despite limited empirical research on church-based lay counseling programs,[69] the available evidence suggests their effectiveness in delivering treatment.

2.11 Challenges in Christian Ministry in Thane

The Christian community in India, although smaller in comparison to Hinduism and Islamic, possesses ancient roots dating back to the arrival of St. Thomas the Apostle in Kerala in AD 52. Over time, Christianity in India has evolved into various

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[67] A Christensen and N.S. Jacobson, "Who (or What) Can Do Psychotherapy: The Status and Challenge of Nonprofessional Therapies," *Psychological Science,* 5, no. 1 (1994): 8–14.

[68] Y.M Toh et al., "The Evaluation of a Church Based Lay Counseling Program: Some Preliminary Data.," *Journal of Psychology and Christianity,* 13, no. 3 (1994): 270–75.

[69] Y.M Toh and Siang-Yang Tan, "The Effectiveness of Church-Based Lay Counselors: Acontrolled Outcome Study," *Journal of Psychology and Christianity,* 16, no. 3 (1997): 260–67.

denominations, including Roman Catholicism, Eastern Orthodox Churches, and numerous Protestant sects. This diversity is evident in the integration of local customs and languages into Christian traditions, reflected in the unique architectural styles of churches, melodies of hymns, and flavors of cuisine during festivals. Despite constituting a minority, Indian Christians have left a significant mark on society by establishing educational and healthcare institutions throughout the country, exemplified by prestigious establishments like St. Xavier's College in Mumbai and Christian Medical College in Vellore. [70] Nevertheless, Christianity in India grapples with challenges such as controversies surrounding religious conversions[71] and instances of persecution.

It is essential to recognize that Indian culture and traditions, deeply ingrained in the fabric of society, transcend religious, caste, and linguistic boundaries, shaping the lives of all citizens. Historically, this cultural cohesion intensified following foreign invasions, notably the Mughal and British rule, prompting Indians to unite and assert their identity. Post-independence, the Indian constitution enshrined democratic principles of liberty, fraternity, and equality, prioritizing the protection of marginalized communities, the impoverished, and minorities. [72] However, amidst this backdrop emerged a minority faction (right wing forces, such as Sangh Parivar) advocating for a distinct form of nationalism, challenging the notion of granting special privileges to minority groups. Over time, this faction has gained political influence, opposing affirmative action for minorities.

The Sangh Parivar, which encompasses the RSS and its political wing, the BJP, is characterized as a fascist and fundamentalist force within India which is very much active

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[70] "The Vibrant Tapestry of Christianity in India: Faith, Diversity, and Challenges," Anglican Frontier Missions, November 5, 2023, https://anglicanfrontiers.com/the-vibrant-tapestry-of-christianity-in-india-faith-diversity-and-challenges/.

[71] "'In Search of Justice and Peace: Challenges to the Christians of India,'" n.d.

[72] "The Mission of the Church in India: New Challenges and Opportunities – SEDOS – SERVICE OF DOCUMENTATION AND STUDY ON GLOBAL MISSION," accessed March 21, 2024, https://sedosmission.org/the-mission-of-the-church-in-india-new-challenges-and-opportunities/.

in Thane city as well. Its core ideology revolves around targeting minorities, particularly Christians, employing a range of meticulously composed strategies aimed at keeping them in a perpetual state of defense. These strategies include the dissemination of hate-filled propaganda, often built on lies and distortion of facts, to demonize Christians and gain political leverage.[73] Additionally, tactics such as intimidation, harassment, and even physical violence, as evidenced in attacks in states like Gujarat, Orissa, Maharashtra and Karnataka, serve to suppress and divide the Christian community.

In their pursuit of power and dominance, the right-wing forces employs divisive tactics, pitting members of the Christian community against one another and sowing seeds of doubt and mistrust. This strategy is exemplified by instances where certain Christians, influenced by the rhetoric of the forces, justify, or minimize attacks against their own community. Add 39 here Moreover, the forces employs a manipulative narrative that portrays Christians as perpetrators rather than victims, leading to cases being filed against them in the aftermath of attacks, further exacerbating their plight.[74]

Furthermore, the force's infiltration and manipulation of government institutions, including the bureaucracy, police, judiciary, and media, severely undermine the ability of Christian victims to seek justice or highlight their grievances. By tampering with education systems and textbooks, instilling prejudices against minorities, and advocating for anti-conversion laws, they perpetuate a hostile environment for Christians and those advocating for human rights and justice.[75] These tactics subjugate them to attacks and accusations of being anti-national.

The strategies outlined above provide a glimpse into the extensive tactics employed by right-wing Hindu factions in India. Their relentless pursuit of a hegemonic agenda, centered around the concept of "one nation, one culture, one language," reflects a

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[73] "'In Search of Justice and Peace: Challenges to the Christians of India.'"
[74] "'In Search of Justice and Peace: Challenges to the Christians of India.'"
[75] "'In Search of Justice and Peace: Challenges to the Christians of India.'"

fervent desire to establish India as a "Hindu Nation State." This agenda, requiring adherence from Christians and Muslims, starkly contradicts the principles of equality and religious freedom enshrined in the secular constitution, indicating a significant resistance to these core values within the country. Recent incidents in Thane city mirror the broader landscape of India, suggesting that the situation in Thane is not much different from the rest of the country.

2.12 Exemplary Models for Equipping Lay Christian Counseling Leaders

Lay Christian counseling involves spiritually-mature Christians offering supportive guidance on a paraprofessional level to individuals facing life challenges. While it shares common aims with secular counseling, such as enhancing listening skills and facilitating behavioral change, its distinctive goal is to integrate an understanding of human nature with principles derived from Jesus Christ and the Bible alongside modern psychological insights.

Establishing a lay counseling ministry presents challenges, because it requires pastors with specific qualities and dedication. In India, some pastors fulfill similar roles as hospital and school chaplains, in order to utilizing their spiritual gifts. However, the focus here is on integrating such pastoral care within the local church setting. Success in one church, backed by pastoral team and lay leader support, can provide the way for replication in other churches facing similar needs. Tan outlines a five-step approach for building a lay counseling ministry, offering a structured path toward implementation and expansion:

1. Become familiar with the three models for counseling ministry[76] (Informal-spontaneous model, Informal-organized model and Formal-organized model[77]).

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[76] Tan, Scalise, and Clinton, *Lay Counseling, Revised and Updated*, 91.
[77] Tan, Scalise, and Clinton, 89–90.

2. Garner support for the idea of lay counseling from the pastor, pastoral staff, and church board.

3. Screen potential lay Christian counselors from the congregation.

4. Provide a training program for lay counselors.

5. Develop programs or ministries where the trained lay counselors can be used.[78]

2.12.1. Selection of Lay counselors

Careful selection of lay counselors is pivotal for establishing a successful lay counseling ministry. Yet, there exists limited consensus and research on the specific criteria for counselor selection. Nonetheless, Tan proposes the following minimum criteria for selecting lay Christian counselors for a lay counseling ministry:

1. **Spiritual maturity.** The ideal counselor should be a mature Christian, deeply committed to following Christ and filled with the Holy Spirit, as emphasized in Galatians 6:1. They should possess a thorough understanding of Scripture and demonstrate wisdom in its application to daily life, coupled with a consistent prayer life. Additionally, they should be well-known to church leadership, exhibiting a healthy respect for spiritual and other forms of authority, and maintaining a reputation for ethical integrity and moral uprightness. Prospective counselors should also have a significant tenure of active involvement within the local congregation, with a recommended minimum duration of one year.

2. **Psychological stability.** The counselor should possess psychological stability, characterized by emotional openness and vulnerability while maintaining resilience. They should not be experiencing significant emotional volatility or instability, and should not be grappling with serious psychological disorders or major marital conflicts, if married. In cases where the individual has faced

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[78] Tan, Scalise, and Clinton, 93–94.

challenges related to substance abuse or behavioral addictions such as pornography or gambling, it is advisable for them to have completed a minimum of two years of recovery before engaging in counseling roles.

3. **Love for and interest in people.** The counselor should possess warmth, genuine care, and a sincere interest in people and their well-being. Engaging in this ministry entails a profound responsibility and calls for a heart filled with compassion and grace.

4. **Spiritual gifts.** The counselor should demonstrate spiritual gifts that are relevant to their role, such as encouragement, wisdom, knowledge, discernment, mercy, and healing, as outlined in passages like Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12.

5. **Some life experience.** It's important for the counselor to have life experiences, particularly in relational settings, which often come with age and maturity.

6. **Previous training or experience in helping people.** While academic and formal training or experience could be beneficial, they are not essential since such preparation is typically included within the lay counseling ministry.

7. **Age, sex, education, socioeconomic status, and ethnic/cultural background.** It is good to have a diverse range of counselors, encompassing various backgrounds, ages, and genders.

8. **Availability and teachability.** The counselor should be able to dedicate several hours per week for training, supervision, and active participation in the lay counseling ministry. They should demonstrate responsiveness, teachability, and a willingness to embrace a biblical approach to assisting others.

9. **Ability to maintain confidentiality.** The counselor should demonstrate an understanding of, respect for, and commitment to maintaining strict confidentiality and safeguarding the privacy of clients, in accordance with ministry guidelines.

10. **Willingness to submit to any required background checks.** The counselor should consent to any necessary background checks to ensure adherence to the church's risk management policies. Considering these ten criteria, what are the most effective approaches to assess potential lay counselors to ensure that those selected meet the majority, if not all, of the criteria?[79]

To select potential lay counsellors effectively based on Tan's criteria, a thorough assessment approach is essential. This might include conducting structured interviews to assess their spiritual maturity, dedication to ethical standards, and adherence to church guidelines. Additionally, psychological evaluations can aid in determining their emotional stability and readiness for counseling roles. Reviewing their past experiences in ministry and life is crucial to ensuring they possess the necessary empathy and relational skills. Observing their availability, willingness to learn, and compatibility with the counseling team during group interactions can also offer valuable insights. Finally, conducting background checks and confirming references are vital steps to ensure adherence to risk management policies and uphold the integrity of the counseling ministry.

There are various screening techniques are employed to select Lay Counselors; however, as a participant in the lay counseling training program at the La Canada Presbyterian Church, California I aim to provide insight into their specific screening process for potential lay counselors, offering valuable reference for our research. This screening process was also used as an example by Tan in his book.

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[79] Tan, Scalise, and Clinton, 105–6.

2.12.2 The example of La Canada Presbyterian Church

La Canada Presbyterian Church in Southern California is an example of a local church that has developed a comprehensive and stringent screening process for the selection of lay counselors, consisting of three major phases. In Phase One, all applicants are required to complete a written questionnaire or application form with the following nine items along with the name, address, and telephone number(s) of the applicant.

1. What do you believe constitutes effective counseling?

2. What does being a Christian mean to you personally?

3. What does it mean to you to counsel others as a Christian?

4. If you have had previous counseling experiences (either as a counselor or counselee) that may be helpful for us to know, please describe them and their significance to you.

5. What (if any) prior training or education have you had that they may help you to be a counselor?

6. Prior work experience (list most recent first).

7. Would you please list as references the names, addresses, and phone numbers of two people who would be willing and able to affirm and endorse your participation in this ministry.

8. Why do you want to be a lay counselor?

9. Within the last two years have you experienced (or are you currently experiencing, or expect to experience) any significant life changes, e.g., separation, divorce, death in the family, job change, critical illness, etc.? Please explain.

Applicants' written responses and recommendations from two listed references determine their progression to Phase Two of the selection process. During Phase Two, chosen candidates undergo interviews conducted by the church's lay counseling task force, comprising of five members, including two licensed mental health professionals

serving as supervising consultants, the lay counseling ministry coordinator/director, and two lay counselors. Annually, if feasible, sixteen applicants are selected for two group interviews, each comprising eight candidates.

The following ten basic questions are asked of the applicants in the group interview process:

1. Please tell us your name and something about your current work situation.

2. What do you understand to be the purpose of the lay counseling ministry?

3. What to you are some of the more important ingredients of effective counseling?

4. What does it mean to you to be a Christian?

5. Admittedly the lay counseling ministry requires a significant commitment of time and effort, perhaps six to ten hours per week. How do you see yourself meeting such a demanding responsibility?

6. Being a La Canada Presbyterian Church lay counselor means more than counseling counselees. It involves being a part of a team of lay counselors who can be at sometimes intensely earnest and serious while at other times free and frivolous. How might you fit in among such a group?

7. How do you see yourself already or currently involved in the "counseling" of friends or colleagues?

8. How do you think being a lay counselor will meet your needs?

9. How have you felt about this interviewing experience today?

10. Do you have any questions for us?

The interviewers evaluate the answers given by each applicant to each of the ten basic questions, using a scale of 1 to 10 (1 = Unsatisfactory Response: Seemingly without thought; presented uncomfortably; of the la thought not coincident with the direction unconfortiore Response: Somewhat thoughtful Presented somewhat comfortably;

practically coincident with the direction of the lay counseling ministry; 10 = Excellent Response: Thoughtful, presented comfortably; coincides with the direction of the lay counseling ministry). Each interviewer then rates each applicant as to his or her personal sense of the applicant as a counselor on a 1 to 10 scale as follows:

1. Would be psychologically/relationally dangerous.

2. Would probably make most people uneasy.

3. Would probably make many people uneasy.

4. Makes me moderately uneasy.

5. Makes me slightly uneasy.

6. Blah, but not dangerous.

7. Certain others might benefit from this person.

8. I would enjoy time with this person, but don't know if it would be beneficial.

9. I might benefit by seeing this person.

10. I would benefit by seeing this person.

Each interviewer also rates each applicant as to his or her personal sense of the applicant's benefit to the lay counseling ministry on a 1 to 10 scale as follows:

1. Ministry must not have him/her.

2. Ministry would rarely benefit from him/her.

3. Ministry would seldom benefit from him/her.

4. Ministry would infrequently benefit from him/her.

5. Ministry would sporadically benefit from him/her.

6. Ministry would occasionally benefit from him/her.

7. Ministry might benefit a little from him/her.

8. Ministry would probably benefit some from him/her.

9. Ministry would definitely benefit from him/her.

10. Ministry must have him/her.

A final part of the Phase Two interview process is a unique one that involves the eight applicants ranking themselves and each other in terms of their potential of helping or counseling ability. An Applicant Feedback Sheet is used with the following major question: Accurate perception of self and of others is a criterion often used in assessing potential counselor ability. To then, we would like you to consider the following: Imagine someone in need help us with this process, of counseling. Imagine that he or she had somehow been able to observe our interview session here today. Based on our time together, which person of these applicants do you believe the observer would be most likely to select for help? (Please include yourself in the ranking which goes from first to eighth).

A final group of applicants (usually eight to ten) is selected from Phase Two interviews. They go on to Phase Three of the process, the Lay Counseling Initial Intensive Training Program, which usually begins in March and ends in August of each year. Applicants who successfully complete Phase Three training selected to become lay counselors for one year. a are then required minimum time commitment of one year.[80]

La Canada Presbyterian Church has implemented a rigorous screening process to ensure the selection of qualified lay counselors. Through three comprehensive phases, candidates undergo thorough evaluations of their beliefs, experiences, and suitability for counseling roles. This meticulous approach ensures that only the most suitable individuals progress to the intensive training program and subsequently serve as lay counselors, upholding the church's commitment to providing effective and compassionate pastoral care to its community.

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[80] Tan, Scalise, and Clinton, 110–13.

Module for Lay Counselor training

Several modules of lay Christian counselor training have been utilized by churches over the years.[81] Effective lay counseling ministry relies heavily on thorough counselor training modules and supervision. Structured training programs covering spiritual aspects, counseling techniques, and risk management are crucial for equipping lay counselors and supervisors.[82] Ultimately, these efforts are aimed at benefiting the individuals who seek support from the lay counseling ministry.

Tan suggests that the establishment of a lay counseling ministry necessitates the development of a comprehensive training program, although evidence on the efficacy of trained lay counselors remains inconclusive. While research suggests that lay counselors can be as effective as professional counselors, the actual levels of skillfulness and competency between the two groups have not been thoroughly examined. This raises questions about the effectiveness of traditional professional training programs in producing consistently competent counselors.[83] Consequently, there is a need for more focused and shorter-duration training programs tailored to the specific needs and capabilities of lay counselors, emphasizing basic helping skills, crisis management, and referral services.

Dr. Gary Collins proposes a structured approach to training lay counselors consisting of three distinct phases: pre-training, training, and post-training. The pre-training phase involves selecting materials, publicizing the program, and conducting initial courses on caring and discovering spiritual gifts. The training phase focuses on providing counseling skills through lectures, role-playing, and supervised discussions, typically spanning forty to fifty hours over several months. Key components of this phase include biblical knowledge, counseling skills, understanding common problems, ethics,

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[81] Tan, Scalise, and Clinton, 117.

[82] "Training & Supervision," accessed March 22, 2024, http://www.brotherhoodmutual.com/lay-counseling/training-and-supervision/.

[83] Tan, Scalise, and Clinton, *Lay Counseling, Revised and Updated*, 116.

and referral techniques. The post-training phase entails ongoing learning, supervision of cases, and support for newly trained lay counselors as they embark on their ministry of people-helping.[84]

Gary Sweeten's Model

Gary Sweeten, a former minister at College Hill Presbyterian Church, devised a model for training lay Christian counselors that begins with a broad-based approach to raising the general level of personal and interpersonal functioning within a congregation. This aims to transform the church into a therapeutic growth community. Individuals with the necessary talents, skills, gifts, and calling are then selected for involvement in the ministry of helping and pastoral care. Sweeten's discipleship counseling approach integrates psychology, Christian theology, and the Holy Spirit's power, utilizing various training materials such as books, audio, and video recordings. The training program consists of four main courses: "Apples of Gold I" and "Apples of Gold II" focus on interpersonal skills development, while "Rational Christian Thinking" integrates rational-emotive therapy principles with Scripture to facilitate mind renewal. The final course, "Breaking Free from the Past," delves into addressing past traumas, generational blessings and curses, and personal sins and character defects in a supportive small group setting, with significant emphasis on self-disclosure and prayer.[85]

Kenneth Haugk's Model and the Stephen series

Dr. Kenneth Haugk, a pastor, clinical psychologist, author, and educator, introduced the Stephen Series of lay caring ministry in 1975 through Stephen Ministries, a nonprofit organization headquartered in St. Louis, Missouri. While Haugk's model

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[84] G.R. Collins, *Lay Counseling within the Local Church* (Leadership 1, 1980), 78–86.
[85] Tan, Scalise, and Clinton, *Lay Counseling, Revised and Updated*, 118.

primarily focuses on lay caring ministry within local churches, it also incorporates elements of lay Christian counseling. The Stephen Series involves several key components: congregation enrollment with Stephen Ministries, selection of leaders for leadership roles, participation in a twelve-day Leader's Training Course by chosen leaders, congregation readiness for implementing the Stephen Series, recruitment and training of lay caregivers (Stephen ministers), assignment of trained ministers to individuals in need, and ongoing supervision of care relationships. Stephen ministers commit to a two-year involvement, including fifty hours of training, regular visits to care recipients, and supervision sessions. The Leader's Training Course covers administrative aspects, training topics, and strategies for implementing and maintaining Stephen Ministry within congregations. Training topics include various aspects of caring, such as effective communication, crisis intervention, grief counseling, and ministering to specific demographics like the elderly or individuals experiencing divorce. Additionally, Stephen leaders receive instruction on congregational preparation, volunteer recruitment, supervision, and recognition of Stephen ministers' contributions.[86]

Haugk's model and the Stephen Series cater well to the informal-organized lay counseling ministry model, while Sweeten's models offer flexibility across all three models: informal-spontaneous, informal-organized, and formal-organized. Although Collins's training phases and other models are pertinent mainly to the informal-organized and formal-organized approaches, they collectively represent significant frameworks in the realm of lay Christian counselor training.[87] While alternative models may exist, the ones highlighted in this discussion stand out as prominent and influential within the field.

Overall, the models discussed in the paragraph offer valuable insights and frameworks that can inform the development of a model for equipping lay leaders for

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[86] Tan, Scalise, and Clinton, 120–22.

[87] Tan, Scalise, and Clinton, 122.

Christian counseling in Thane, Maharashtra. By drawing upon these models and adapting them to the specific context and needs of the local community, churches can play a significant role in promoting church growth and social transformation through effective lay counseling ministry.

2.12.3 Supervision of the Lay Counselor

In the realm of counseling or therapy, supervision pertains to overseeing and guiding the clinical practice of activities such as counseling or therapy sessions. A widely accepted definition of clinical supervision is the one proposed by C. Loganbill, E. Hardy, and U. Delworth: "an intensive, interpersonally focused, one-to-one relationship in which one person is designated to facilitate the development of therapeutic competence in the other person." The clinical supervisor plays a pivotal role in guiding and supporting counselors as they enhance their skills, competency, and overall effectiveness.[88]

Doman Lum, a Pastoral Counselor and Chaplain from Hawaii, suggests that effective lay counseling requires several key components: first, the screening of potential volunteers to ensure suitability for the role; second, comprehensive training for lay counselors covering both theoretical knowledge and practical skills; third, the establishment of a task-oriented program to guide counselors in their work; and finally, ongoing supervision provided by a mental health professional or, in the context of the church, by the pastor.[89]

Lay Christian counselors undergo training covering both theoretical understanding and practical skills. Lum suggests that selected counselors should be trained in various areas relevant to church situations. This includes discussions on supportive counseling approaches, group dynamics, sensitivity training, family,

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[88] Tan, Scalise, and Clinton, 136.
[89] Doman Lum, "Safe," *Pastoral Psychology* 21, no. 5 (May 1, 1970): 19–26, https://doi.org/10.1007/BF01837040.

adolescent, and marriage counseling, as well as dealing with crises like sickness, mental health issues, suicide, alcoholism, and old age. Training can be provided by a pastor with clinical expertise or a mental health professional supportive of church and community mental health initiatives.[90]

"To research means to re-search," that is, to search again, thus indicating an ongoing process. While research may establish facts and reach conclusions, it is never final. Its very nature ensures that new questions and avenues of exploration are made possible. Hence, this research is Lay counselors who have undergone initial training require continuous supervision and additional training to enhance their skills and effectiveness. Whether conducted in group settings or through one-on-one sessions, supervision entails the responsibility of guiding and overseeing counselors to further develop their competence and proficiency in counseling practices.[91]

According to Tan, here are five possible models of lay counseling supervision by Tan:

1. The Minimum Intervention Model

2. The Vertical Supervision Model

3. The Professional Training Model

4. The Implicit Trust Model

5. The Theoretical or Developmental Model[92]

Supervision in counseling or therapy involves overseeing and guiding clinical activities to facilitate the development of therapeutic competence. Effective lay counseling requires screening, comprehensive training, task-oriented guidance, and ongoing supervision. Lay Christian counselors receive training covering theoretical knowledge and practical skills relevant to church situations, including supportive

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[90] Lum, 19–26.

[91] Tan, Scalise, and Clinton, *Lay Counseling, Revised and Updated*, 136.

[92] Tan, Scalise, and Clinton, 137–40.

counseling approaches, crisis intervention, and various counseling dynamics. Research is an ongoing process, suggesting continuous exploration and improvement. Lay counselors require continuous supervision and additional training to enhance their skills and effectiveness, which can be facilitated through various supervision models such as the Minimum Intervention Model, Vertical Supervision Model, Professional Training Model, Implicit Trust Model, and Theoretical or Developmental Model.

2.12.4 Ethics Liability and Pitfalls

In India, counseling and psychotherapy are burgeoning fields, extending beyond traditional settings like hospitals to encompass various spheres such as educational institutions, communities, workplaces, and even online platforms. The fundamental tenets of these professions rest upon creating safe, confidential, and trusting environments for individuals seeking support. Ethics, therefore, serve as the cornerstone of practice, guided by principles like autonomy, nonmaleficence, beneficence, justice, fidelity, and veracity.

Confidentiality emerges as a significant ethical dilemma for counselors, particularly in a society marked by collectivist values and hierarchical family structures. Clients entrust therapists with sensitive information, but cultural norms often pressure counselors to disclose such details to family members, jeopardizing client trust and autonomy. Additionally, issues of confidentiality become complex in cases involving minors, where legal and familial dynamics further complicate the counselor's role.

Another ethical quandary revolves around maintaining therapeutic boundaries. Given the relational nature of Indian society, clients may inadvertently breach boundaries by inviting counselors into social or familial settings, blurring the line between professional and personal relationships. Counselors must navigate these situations delicately, upholding professional standards while respecting cultural norms.

Furthermore, counselor competence poses a significant ethical challenge in India, where regulations governing counseling practice remain ambiguous. This ambiguity risks clients seeking assistance from underqualified practitioners, compromising the quality of care provided. Establishing clear qualifications and competencies for counselors is imperative to ensure ethical practice and safeguard client well-being.

Societal values also influence the counseling process, as therapists inevitably convey their own values to clients. In India's diverse cultural landscape, counselors must be cognizant of the values they impart and navigate potential conflicts with clients' beliefs. Additionally, counselors must stay abreast of emerging ethical challenges posed by technological advancements and legal frameworks, such as those related to confidentiality in electronic communications and the protection of client rights under various laws.[93]

Ultimately, promoting ethical competence and awareness among lay leaders embarking on Christian counseling endeavors in Thane, Maharashtra, is paramount. Training programs must equip lay counselors with a deep understanding of ethical principles, cultural sensitivities, and legal obligations. Lay leaders should be empowered to uphold confidentiality, maintain professional boundaries, demonstrate competence, and navigate value conflicts ethically, thereby fostering church growth and social transformation rooted in ethical practice and client empowerment.

2.13 Conclusion

The challenges faced by the Christian community in Thane, India, are emblematic of broader societal issues revolving around religious and cultural diversity, nationalism, and the struggle for minority rights. Despite the historical contributions and deep-rooted

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[93] "Safeguarding Client and Counselor: Ethical Dilemmas in Psychotherapy in India. Exploring the Foundations for Ethical Practice.," MHI : Mariwala Health Initiative, accessed March 26, 2024, https://mhi.org.in/about/.

presence of Christians in Indian society, they confront significant hurdles, including controversies surrounding religious conversions, instances of persecution, and the pervasive influence of right-wing Hindu factions like the Sangh Parivar.

These challenges manifest in various forms, ranging from hate-filled propaganda and divisive tactics to intimidation, harassment, and physical violence aimed at suppressing the Christian community. Additionally, the infiltration of government institutions and the manipulation of public discourse exacerbate the marginalization of Christians, impeding their ability to seek justice or advocate effectively for their rights.

The situation in Thane mirrors the broader landscape of India, where the principles of equality, religious freedom, and secularism encounter staunch opposition from forces seeking to establish a homogenized Hindu nationalist agenda. Nevertheless, the resilience and perseverance of the Christian community in Thane and across India remain evident as they continue to uphold their faith and contribute to the diverse tapestry of Indian culture and society.

In the context of Thane, Maharashtra, amidst these challenges, the expansion of counseling and psychotherapy, particularly within the realm of lay Christian counseling, presents an opportunity for church growth and social transformation. However, to harness this potential effectively it is imperative to prioritize ethical competence and awareness among lay leaders engaged in counseling ministry.

The burgeoning nature of counseling practices across various societal spheres underscores the need for a steadfast commitment to ethical principles guided by autonomy, confidentiality, and cultural sensitivity. Robust training programs must equip lay counselors with the requisite knowledge and skills to navigate ethical dilemmas, maintain professional boundaries, and uphold the rights of individuals seeking support. Moreover, establishing clear qualifications and competencies is essential to ensure the quality of care provided to those in need. By empowering lay leaders with a deep

understanding of ethical principles and legal obligations, training programs can facilitate the growth of effective and ethical lay counseling ministries.

Through this commitment to ethical practice, lay leaders can play a pivotal role in fostering church growth and social transformation rooted in client empowerment and ethical integrity. Ultimately, the promotion of ethical competence among lay leaders not only safeguards the well-being of individuals but also cultivates a culture of trust, respect, and compassion within the community, contributing to the broader goals of church growth and social transformation in Thane, Maharashtra, and beyond.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

According to retired professor of United Theological College, Hunter P. Mabry, "the term Method refers to the procedures to be followed in the conduct of research; on the other hand, 'methodology,' refers to a study of methods, a critical investigation of the principals underlying the use of particular method or methods…"[1] thus Methodology is the way the researcher goes about achieving the purpose already stated.

3.1 Research Design

The study will employ a mixed-methods research design, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative approaches. This combination allows for a thorough examination of the factors influencing the preparation of lay leaders for Christian counseling as part of church growth and social transformation in the city of Thane, Maharashtra, India

3.1.1. What is the mixed methods approach?

The mixed methods approach is characterized by three key components that make it highly pertinent to this dissertation "A MODEL FOR EQUIPPING LAY LEADERS FOR CHRISTIAN COUNSELING AS PART OF CHURCH GROWTH AND SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION IN THE CITY OF THANE, MAHARASHTRA, INDIA":

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[1] Hunter P. Mabry, *A Manuel for Researchers and Writers*, second edition (Bangalore, India: BTESSC, 2007), 41.

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1. Integration of qualitative and quantitative methodologies into a unified research framework acknowledges the importance of blending traditionally distinct qualitative and quantitative methods to gain a comprehensive understanding of the research issue. In this study, both qualitative and quantitative techniques will be employed to explore various facets of preparing lay leaders for Christian counseling and its influence on church growth and social change in Thane.

2. Emphasis on triangulation[2] is placed on establishing robust connections between different research approaches. Triangulation serves as a guiding principle in mixed methods research, ensuring that the combination of qualitative and quantitative data enhances the validity and reliability of the findings. In this dissertation, triangulation will be utilized to justify the use of diverse research methodologies and to deepen insights into the effectiveness of preparing lay leaders for Christian counseling in promoting church growth and societal transformation in Thane.

3. A focus on pragmatic solutions to research problems prioritizes practical applicability over strict adherence to philosophical traditions. The mixed methods approach in this dissertation is driven by the desire to effectively address the research problem of preparing lay leaders for Christian counseling in Thane. This involves employing methodologies from various philosophical traditions if they prove beneficial in generating practical insights and solutions for enhancing church growth and fostering societal transformation in the city.[3]

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[2] Definition: "Triangulation involves the practice of viewing things from more than one perspective. This can mean the use of different methods, different sources of data or even different researches within the study." From, Martyn Denscombe, *The Good Research Guide: For Small-Scale Social Research Projects*, 4th ed, Open UP Study Skills (Maidenhead, England: McGraw-Hill/Open University Press, 2010), 347.

[3] Denscombe, 138–39.

By adopting a mixed methods approach tailored to the specific context of Thane and the objectives of the dissertation, the research aims to offer comprehensive and actionable insights into the model for preparing lay leaders for Christian counseling and its implications for church growth and societal change in the region.

3.2 Research Questions and Hypotheses

Researchers provide clear guidance for readers by laying out a roadmap for their study. This roadmap begins with the purpose statement, which sets the main direction for the research. From this overarching purpose, the researcher then refines the focus by posing specific questions to answer or testing predictions based on hypotheses.[4] This section is for crafting qualitative research questions, quantitative research questions, objectives, and hypotheses, as well as mixed methods research questions.

1. What are the cultural and contextual factors influencing the effectiveness of Christian lay counseling within the diverse communities of Thane, Maharashtra, India?

    Hypothesis: The effectiveness of Christian lay counseling in Thane, Maharashtra, India, is significantly influenced by cultural factors such as religious beliefs, societal norms, and regional traditions, as well as contextual factors such as economic status, education level, and access to mental health resources.

2. **How** do perceptions of mental health and counseling within the Christian community in Thane impact the adoption and utilization of lay counseling services?

    Hypothesis: The perceptions of mental health and counseling within the Christian community in Thane significantly impact the adoption and utilization of lay counseling

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[4] John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 3rd ed (Los Angeles: Sage, 2009), 129.

services, with attitudes shaped by religious teachings, stigma surrounding mental health issues, and awareness of available counseling resources.

3. What are the challenges faced by Christian lay counseling leaders in Thane?

Hypothesis: Christian lay counseling leaders in Thane encounter various challenges, including limited resources and training opportunities, cultural barriers, stigma associated with seeking counseling, and navigating the complexities of providing counseling within diverse communities.

4. What strategies can be developed to equip lay counseling leaders for ministry growth and social transformation in Thane?

Hypothesis: Effective strategies for equipping lay counseling leaders in Thane for ministry growth and social transformation may include comprehensive training programs, culturally sensitive counseling approaches, collaboration with local mental health organizations, and active engagement with community leaders and stakeholders.

5. What are the theological foundations and frameworks guiding Christian lay counseling practices in Thane, and how do they align with the cultural and social context of the region?

Hypothesis: The theological foundations and frameworks guiding Christian lay counseling practices in Thane reflect a combination of scriptural teachings, doctrinal beliefs, and practical applications tailored to the cultural and social context of the region, emphasizing compassion, empathy, and holistic approaches to counseling within a Christian framework. write a concluding paragraph on the basis of above mention paragraphs.

The exploration of cultural and contextual factors influencing the effectiveness of Christian lay counseling in Thane, Maharashtra, India, alongside perceptions of mental health within the Christian community, has revealed significant insights. The challenges faced by lay counseling leaders in Thane are multifaceted, ranging from resource

limitations to cultural stigmas. However, by developing tailored strategies focusing on comprehensive training, cultural sensitivity, and collaboration with local organizations, lay counseling leaders can be better equipped for ministry growth and social transformation in Thane. Furthermore, understanding the theological foundations and aligning them with the cultural and social context of the region underscores the importance of a holistic approach to Christian lay counseling. Ultimately, these findings provide a roadmap for enhancing the effectiveness and impact of Christian lay counseling practices in Thane, fostering positive change within the community and beyond.

3.3 Sampling Technique

For the study's research questions, participants were drawn from pastors or lay leaders of churches in Thane city, Maharashtra, India. The selection criteria included churches of varying sizes, with a minimum membership of 100 or more attendees. This criterion is crucial as larger churches typically offer a richer context for exploring mentoring relationships due to their greater staff presence. While efforts will be made to include participants of both genders, the majority would be male, reflecting the prevailing demographic of pastors in the area. Additionally, the researcher intended to focus on participants aged forty and above to leverage their life experiences.

Recruitment involved reaching out to qualified individuals via personal phone calls or emails. Purposive sampling is employed to intentionally select participants with expertise in lay leadership or Christian counseling within the context of Thane, Maharashtra.[5] Many participants will be chosen based on pre-existing relationships, with additional recommendations provided by the researcher's pastor. Snowball sampling was also utilized, wherein interviewees suggested peers for inclusion in the study.[6] Early in

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[5] Denscombe, *The Good Research Guide*, 41.
[6] Denscombe, 42–43.

the interview process, participants will be asked to recommend additional participants, facilitating the recruitment of a sufficient number of participants for the study.

Through purposive sampling, the selected participants will offer valuable insights into the research topic: "A MODEL FOR EQUIPPING LAY LEADERS FOR CHRISTIAN COUNSELING AS PART OF CHURCH GROWTH AND SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION IN THE CITY OF THANE, MAHARASHTRA, INDIA." This approach ensures that the sample represents individuals with relevant experience and knowledge, enhancing the comprehensiveness and depth of the study's findings.

3.4 Measurement

By using a quantitative methodology, this study investigates the efficacy of a personalized model designed to equip lay leaders for Christian counseling, within the unique context of fostering church growth and societal transformation in Thane, Maharashtra, India. By utilizing quantitative research methods, the study aims to uncover causal relationships, test hypotheses, and make predictions aligned with its research objectives. It specifically examines the impact of this model within the realm of Christian counseling training for lay leaders. This methodological approach offers the distinct advantage of enabling rigorous scientific data analysis, thus facilitating the extrapolation of findings to broader contexts. The questionnaire employed in the study was carefully structured into three segments: the initial segment screens respondents to ascertain their involvement in lay leadership roles within Christian communities, followed by the collection of demographic data including gender, age, and educational background. The final segment comprises statements measured on a Likert scale[7], intended to assess the

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[7] Pritha Bhandari, "What Is a Likert Scale? | Guide & Examples," Scribbr, July 3, 2020, https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/likert-scale/.

identified variables crucial to evaluating the effectiveness of the counseling model.[8] Through this meticulous quantitative framework, the study endeavours to provide empirical insights essential for fostering the growth and transformation of churches and communities in Thane, Maharashtra, India.

3.5 Data Collection Methods:

3.5.1 Qualitative Data:

In the context of the dissertation "A MODEL FOR EQUIPPING LAY LEADERS FOR CHRISTIAN COUNSELING AS PART OF CHURCH GROWTH AND SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION IN THE CITY OF THANE, MAHARASHTRA, INDIA," qualitative approaches to data collection, analysis, interpretation, and report writing offer unique perspectives compared to traditional quantitative methods. Purposeful sampling will be employed to select participants with relevant experience and knowledge in lay leadership and Christian counseling within the context of Thane, Maharashtra. Open-ended data will be collected through semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders, including pastors, lay leaders, Christian counselors, and community members involved in church activities. Additionally, focus group discussions may be conducted to gather insights from different groups within the church community.

Thematic analysis will serve as the primary method for data analysis, aiming to identify recurring themes, patterns, and perspectives emerging from interview transcripts and focus group discussions. This process involves coding the data, grouping similar codes into themes, and interpreting the findings in relation to the research questions.[9] The

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[8] Aga Hutama Tirta and Amelia Enrika, "Understanding the Impact of Reward and Recognition, Work Life Balance, on Employee Retention with Job Satisfaction as Mediating Variable on Millennials in Indonesia," *Journal of Business & Retail Management Research* 14, no. 03 (July 22, 2020): 94, https://doi.org/10.24052/JBRMR/V14IS03/ART-09.

[9] Creswell, *Research Design*. Preface, xxiv.

analysis will draw on qualitative methodologies such as phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, case studies, and narrative research to provide comprehensive insights into the model for equipping lay leaders for Christian counseling and its implications for church growth and social transformation in Thane, Maharashtra, India.

3.6 Quantitative Methods

In the context of the dissertation "A MODEL FOR EQUIPPING LAY LEADERS FOR CHRISTIAN COUNSELING AS PART OF CHURCH GROWTH AND SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION IN THE CITY OF THANE, MAHARASHTRA, INDIA," quantitative methods play a vital role in the processes of collecting, analyzing, interpreting, and presenting research findings. Specific procedures exist for designing survey or experimental methods, which are essential components of the research proposal. Checklists provided in this chapter ensure that all important steps are included in the research design.

Surveys will be administered to a larger sample of lay leaders and church members in Thane to gather quantitative data on their perceptions, experiences, and attitudes towards lay counseling and its impact on church growth and social transformation. Statistical analysis will include descriptive statistics and inferential tests such as correlations and regression analysis to examine relationships between variables such as the equipping of lay leaders, church growth, and social transformation. The data collected will be analysed using appropriate software tools such as SPSS or R, allowing for rigorous analysis and interpretation of the research findings.[10]

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[10] Creswell.

3.7 Data Analysis Techniques

3.7.1 Thematic analysis

Thematic analysis serves as a crucial qualitative data analysis method for this dissertation. Given the subjective nature of the research topic, thematic analysis allows for the exploration of various perspectives, experiences, and attitudes related to lay counseling and its implications for church growth and societal change. Through thematic analysis, the researcher can identify patterns and themes within qualitative data collected from surveys, interviews, and other sources, providing rich insights into the cultural, contextual, and theological aspects influencing lay counseling practices in Thane.

The thematic analysis approach I employ aligns with the inductive method, enabling the derivation of meaning and identification of themes from data without preconceptions. By embracing this approach, the researchers aim to explore the nuanced and multifaceted landscape of lay counseling within the Christian community of Thane, allowing themes to emerge organically from the data. Additionally, the thematic analysis process facilitates the involvement of participants in the research, as their perspectives and experiences contribute to the identification of themes, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the research topic.

While thematic analysis offers flexibility and accessibility, it also presents challenges, including the time-consuming nature of manual analysis and the potential for bias. However, by adhering to rigorous methodological practices and utilizing appropriate tools and techniques, such as coding and theme development, the researcher can mitigate these challenges and ensure the integrity and validity of the research findings.[11] Through the systematic application of thematic analysis, the researcher aim to generate meaningful insights that inform the development of strategies for equipping lay leaders for effective

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[11] "Thematic Analysis: A Step-by-Step Guide," 09 2023, https://dovetail.com/research/thematic-analysis/.

Christian counseling, ultimately contributing to church growth and social transformation in Thane, Maharashtra, India.

3.7.2 Comparative analysis

In the context of this dissertation, a comparative analysis could be a valuable tool for examining various approaches to equipping lay leaders for Christian counseling and assessing their effectiveness in fostering church growth and societal transformation in Thane, Maharashtra, India. By conducting a comparative analysis, the researcher can systematically compare different models, strategies, or interventions aimed at preparing lay leaders for Christian counseling within the local context. For example, the researcher could compare the outcomes of comprehensive training programs versus culturally sensitive counseling approaches to determine which method yields better results in terms of ministry growth and social impact.

Comparative analysis in this dissertation could also extend to examining the theological foundations and frameworks guiding Christian lay counseling practices in Thane and comparing them with practices in other regions or denominations. This comparative approach could help identify similarities and differences in theological perspectives and their implications for lay counseling effectiveness. Additionally, a comparative analysis could explore how lay counseling leaders in Thane navigate challenges compared to their counterparts in other urban or rural settings, shedding light on contextual factors influencing counseling practices and outcomes.

Furthermore, a comparative analysis could be instrumental in assessing the scalability and adaptability of lay counseling models and strategies from other regions or cultural contexts to the specific context of Thane, Maharashtra. By examining case studies or best practices from similar settings, the researcher can identify lessons learned

and potential pitfalls to avoid when implementing lay counseling programs in Thane.[12] Ultimately, a comparative analysis offers a systematic approach to evaluating different approaches, identifying best practices, and informing evidence-based decisions for equipping lay leaders and promoting church growth and social transformation in Thane.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

The researcher recognizes the paramount importance of adhering to ethical research protocols to safeguard the rights of the human subjects engaged in the study. Prior to their participation, all potential participants were provided with comprehensive information regarding the study's procedures and associated risks, as emphasized by Roberts the author of the book, "The dissertation journey : a practical and comprehensive guide to planning, writing, and defending your dissertation." [13] Furthermore, the researcher ensured that participants fully understood the concept of informed consent, in line with Brinkmann and Kvale's book, "Interviews: learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing."[14] definition, which stipulates that participants should be informed about the study's overarching purpose, design features, and potential risks and benefits. Informed consent will be obtained from all participants before their involvement in the study, ensuring that they are fully aware of the nature and scope of their participation.

Informed consent will be diligently obtained from all participants prior to their engagement in the study. Throughout the research process, utmost confidentiality and anonymity of participants will be upheld. Furthermore, proactive measures will be taken

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[12] "What Is Comparative Analysis? Guide with Examples," 19 2023, https://dovetail.com/research/comparative-analysis/.

[13] Carol Roberts, *The Dissertation Journey: A Practical and Comprehensive Guide to Planning, Writing, and Defending Your Dissertation*, 2nd ed (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Corwin Press, 2010), 33.

[14] Steinar Kvale and Svend Brinkmann, *InterViews: Learning the Craft of Qualitative Research Interviewing*, Third edition (Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2015), 93–94.

to minimize any potential risks to participants, while strictly adhering to ethical guidelines governing research involving human subjects.

3.9 Validity and Reliability

Reliability and Validity serve as critical benchmarks for assessing the quality of research. These concepts gauge the effectiveness of methods, techniques, or tests in accurately measuring aspects pertinent to the study. Reliability pertains to the consistency of a measure, while validity relates to its accuracy in capturing the intended construct. Incorporating considerations of reliability and validity is paramount throughout the research design, methodological planning, and results interpretation phases, particularly in the realm of quantitative research. Neglecting these aspects can introduce various forms of research bias, undermining the integrity and credibility of the study's findings. Therefore, meticulous attention to reliability and validity is essential in ensuring the robustness of the research outcomes and their applicability to the overarching objectives of equipping lay leaders for Christian counseling and fostering church growth and social transformation in Thane, Maharashtra, India.[15]

In the pursuit of ensuring the validity of the study within the realm of our topic it is important to proactively identified and addressed potential threats. These measures encompass:

1. Optimizing interview questions through a pilot study: Despite the distance, the researcher conducted a pilot study, utilizing online platforms such as Zoom Calls, phone calls, and video chats. Participant feedback was solicited via Google Forms to refine the interview guide and process, ensuring the quality of interview questions for the main study.

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[15] Fiona Middleton, "Reliability vs. Validity in Research | Difference, Types and Examples," Scribbr, July 3, 2019, https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/reliability-vs-validity/.

2. Managing time constraints during remote interviews: During the pilot test conducted via online platforms, the researcher refined interview skills to effectively manage time and maintain focus. Emphasis was placed on respecting participants' time, even in virtual settings, to sustain engagement.

3. Addressing potential bias from virtual interactions: Participants were reminded of the confidentiality agreement prior to remote interviews, emphasizing the importance of maintaining privacy and preventing discussions that could influence responses.

4. Promoting authenticity in virtual settings: Despite the remote nature of the interviews, the researcher reiterated the significance of confidentiality and the opportunity to contribute to leadership emergence within churches in Thane. This created a safe space for participants to provide genuine responses.

5. Managing authenticity and minimizing exaggeration: Recognizing the challenges of assessing authenticity in virtual interviews, the researcher actively worked to mitigate tensions between genuine responses and exaggeration, acknowledging the inherent limitations in verifying participants' thoughts and feelings in an online environment.

6. Overcoming reluctance through intentional participant selection: Despite geographical barriers, the researcher intentionally selected participants based on established relationships and sought referrals to engage pastors, navigating potential hesitancy due to busy schedules and distance.

Additionally, the researcher plans to employ triangulation of data sources, leveraging a combination of interviews, surveys, and focus groups conducted remotely, to enhance the validity of findings. Measures such as member checking and peer debriefing will be utilized to further ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the research outcomes.

3.10 Research Limitations

It is crucial to clearly delineate the scope of the problem by precisely defining the boundaries of the investigation. This process entails establishing the specific parameters within which the researcher assumes responsibility for conducting the proposed research. For instance, when exploring the themes of salvation and humanization in the thought of M.M. Thomas, certain concepts within Thomas' body of work may not fall within the purview of the study. Alternatively, the research may focus exclusively on Thomas' writings during a designated time frame to ensure a more targeted and manageable analysis. By meticulously outlining these boundaries, the researcher clarifies the extent of the inquiry and ensures a focused and coherent investigation into the chosen subject matter.[16]

This research may face limitations related to sample representativeness, potential biases in self-reported data, and constraints on generalizability due to the specific context of Thane, Maharashtra. These limitations will be acknowledged and discussed in the research findings.

3.11 Conclusion

The research methodology detailed in this chapter offers a comprehensive framework for examining the process of equipping lay leaders for Christian counseling and its impact on church growth and societal transformation in Thane, Maharashtra, India. Through the adoption of a mixed-methods approach, blending qualitative and quantitative methodologies, the study endeavors to gain a holistic understanding of the various factors influencing the preparation of lay leaders for counseling within the Christian context. This inclusive methodology enables a thorough investigation into

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[16] Mabry, *A Manuel for Researchers and Writers*, 40.

cultural influences, perceptions of mental health, challenges faced by counseling leaders, and the underlying theological frameworks guiding counseling practices.

The integration of qualitative and quantitative methods provides several advantages, facilitating a multifaceted exploration of the research topic. By employing triangulation, which involves cross-referencing information from different data sources, the study enhances the reliability and validity of its findings. Through this approach, the research aims to offer credible insights into the complexities surrounding lay counseling within the diverse community of Thane, Maharashtra, India. Moreover, the formulation of clear research questions and hypotheses guides the study's direction, ensuring a focused and structured approach to data collection and analysis.

Ethical considerations and meticulous attention to reliability and validity are paramount throughout the research process. By adhering to ethical standards and proactively addressing potential threats to validity, such as sample biases and limitations in data collection methods, the study aims to uphold the integrity of its findings. While acknowledging the research limitations inherent in the specific context of Thane, Maharashtra, transparency regarding these constraints enriches the study's conclusions, providing a nuanced understanding of its scope and implications. Overall, the research methodology outlined in this chapter lays a robust foundation for generating valuable insights into the model for equipping lay leaders for Christian counseling, contributing to the fields of lay leadership, Christian counseling, and church growth in Thane and beyond.

CHAPTER **4**

BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR
LAY CHRISTIAN COUNSELING MINISTRY

This chapter delves into the foundational aspects of lay ministry in the church, particularly focusing on counseling. It establishes the biblical basis for lay ministry, drawing from the New Testament's describes Church as people of God, elucidating how it aligns with biblical principles and theology.[110] Emphasizing counseling ministry's integral role in pastoral care, the chapter highlights its ethical considerations and principles. Furthermore, it explores various biblical models that underpin counseling ministry within the Christian context. Integrating biblical teachings with theological insights, this chapter offers a holistic understanding of the spiritual and practical dimensions of lay Christian counseling ministry.

4.1. The People of God as Ministers

4.1.1. The people of God in Both the Testaments.

The Bible offers numerous instances of God's people engaging in ministry, emphasizing that it extends beyond clergy. From ancient Israel to the New Testament Church, the concept of ministry encompasses all believers, each entrusted with unique roles and responsibilities. Paul's analogy of the Church as the "body of Christ"

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[110] Howard Clinebell and Bridget Clare McKeever, *Basic Types of Pastoral Care & Counseling: Resources for the Ministry of Healing and Growth*, Updated and rev. / Bridget Clare McKeever (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2011), 394.

underscores this inclusive nature, highlighting the diverse ministries within the faith community. It signifies a collective covenant with God, where every individual commits to following His ways and contributing to the greater purpose. This biblical perspective underscores the egalitarian ethos of Christian ministry, emphasizing the participation of all members in serving God and others.

Biblical faith is inherently characterized by the concept of covenant, wherein God repeatedly enters into solemn agreements with specific individuals, as demonstrated in the scriptures. Examples of these covenantal relationships include God's covenant with Noah (Genesis 6:18), Abraham (Genesis 15:18), Israel (Exodus 24:8), and David (Psalm 89:3). O. Palmer Robertson, in his seminal work "The Christ of the Covenants," defines covenant as a binding pact between two or more parties, often sealed in blood, symbolizing a commitment of life and death.[111] Through these covenantal relationships, God pledges His unwavering faithfulness, while expecting reciprocal loyalty and obedience from His chosen people (Exodus 23:20-48).

The narrative of creation underscores the covenantal nature of God's relationship with humanity, evidenced by the divine act of creating humankind in His own likeness and image. Despite the rupture caused by humanity's disobedience, God's desire to reconcile the relationship remains evident throughout scripture. This intention is epitomized in the covenant made with Abraham, wherein God promises the land of Canaan to Israel, and later, in the deliverance of Israel from Egypt, which is rooted in God's covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Exodus 2:24).[112] The Passover serves as a poignant symbol of deliverance and salvation, representing the covenantal bond between God and Israel, who are recognized as the people of Yahweh, bound by their collective faith and obedience to the covenant (Exodus 19:6). Despite occasional lapses

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[111] O. Palmer Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants* (Phillipsburg, N.J.: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, 1980), 3.

[112] David Watson, *I Believe in the Church*, 1st American ed (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), 69.

in their priesthood, the notion of Israel as the people of God endures, emphasizing the overarching theme of covenant faith within the biblical narrative.

In the New Testament, the term "church" originates from the Greek word *ekklesia*, denoting "an assembly." [113] Originally a secular term, *ekklesia* evolved to describe the gathering of Christians, symbolizing not merely a collective of God's people but the *community* of them. [114] Drawing parallels with Israel, the Old Testament exemplifies a similar concept of a new community of God's people emerging in the world.[115] Just as the Israelites experienced liberation from physical bondage in Egypt collectively and underwent a communal baptism at the Red Sea, the church today represents a community called out of the world by God, embodying a shared identity and purpose.

Paul's writings underscore the significance of Christians as God's chosen people (Colossians 3:12; Titus 1:1), inheriting the covenantal promises to Abraham (Galatians 3:7-8, 13). Jesus Christ stands as the ultimate fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant, granting believers the promise received by Abraham, thereby establishing a profound covenantal relationship between God and His followers.[116] The church, identified as the new "Israel," embodies the chosen people of God in contemporary times, mirroring the missionary vocation inherent in Israel's election. In the early church, believers perceived themselves not merely as participants in a movement initiated by Jesus but as God's chosen people, reflecting a continuity of God's redemptive plan throughout history.

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[113] Edmund P. Clowney and Gerald Lewis Bray, *The Church*, Contours of Christian Theology (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1995), 30.

[114] Howard Grimes, *The Rebirth of the Laity* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), 83.

[115] John R. W. Stott, *One People: Helping Your Church Become a Caring Community*, Expanded and updated [ed.] (Old Tappan, N.J.: Power Books, 1982), 21.

[116] Theophilus John Herter, *The Abrahamic Covenant in the Gospels* (Cherry Hill, N.J.: Mack Pub. Co., 1972), 10.

4.1.2. Priesthood of all believers

The principle of the priesthood of all believers' challenges entrenched notions of spiritual hierarchy within Christianity, emphasizing the universal calling of all believers as saints, devoid of any distinctions of privilege or status. Rooted in the New Testament depiction of the Church as the living body of Christ, this principle underscores the unity and essential role each believer plays in realizing God's divine purposes. In the book, *I believe in the church*, Watson elucidates further accentuates this unity, drawing parallels between the cohesive integration of diverse members within the body of Christ and other unified entities in Greek language usage.[117] Consequently, the imagery of the body of Christ serves as a poignant reminder that every believer is entrusted with significant responsibilities, with God's divine work on earth being accomplished through the collective efforts of His people.

However, despite the intrinsic importance of this concept, contemporary churches often find themselves ensnared in institutionalism, as highlighted by Ogden, author of *The New Reformation*.[118] Within this framework, clergy occupy a dominant position atop a hierarchical pyramid, fostering a perception of exclusivity and superiority. This historical trend relegates clergy to a separate class, distanced from the broader congregation and contradicting the egalitarian ethos of Christianity. Jesus' ministry on earth epitomizes the breaking down of societal barriers, advocating for inclusivity and equality among all believers, irrespective of race, nationality, class, or gender. Such principles are reaffirmed in Paul's writings, where the term "fellow citizens" underscores the shared participation of believers in God's kingdom, and Ephesians 4:4-6 reinforces the principle of equality and privilege within the community of faith.[119] Elevating clergy

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[117] Watson, *I Believe in the Church*, 91.

[118] Greg Ogden, *The New Reformation: Returning the Ministry to the People of God* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Pub. House, 1990), 19.

[119] Stott, *One People*, 25.

to an exalted status undermines the foundational values of equality and unity within the Church, perpetuating divisions contrary to the essence of Christian fellowship.

In response to this historical entrapment, figures like Jay E. Adams who was the founder of Christian Counseling and Educational Foundation in Philadelphia, have played pivotal roles in reviving the theological vision of the priesthood of all believers, particularly in the realm of church counseling ministries. Adams' efforts in the latter half of the twentieth century acted as a catalyst, issuing a rhetorical call for the active participation of the laity in counseling ministries within local churches. Just as Luther's Reformation awakened the Church to the mutual ministry of the Word in the sixteenth century, Adams' endeavors served to stir a comparable awakening within American churches in the twentieth century. Subsequent generations of biblical counselors have continued to build upon Adams' foundation, developing ecclesiological counseling models that prioritize lay participation. Works such as Robert Kellemen's Equipping Biblical Counselors, Dale Johnson's The Church as a Culture of Care, and the BCC's Biblical Counseling and the Church stand as exemplary contributions to this movement, emphasizing the crucial role of lay involvement in the ministry of the Church.[120]

Thus, to fulfill the responsibilities while nurturing the congregation, it is crucial for pastors and leadership teams to encourage active participation of the laity and utilize their caregiving talents. This not only aids pastors in ministry tasks but also fosters closer and more caring relationships among congregation members and beyond. As emphasized in 1 Peter 2:5, 9, all Christians belong to the universal priesthood of believers, underscoring the mutual ministry imperative for achieving maturity in Christ.[121] Thus, to ensure the congregation receives necessary care and facilitate church growth, the

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[120] "Biblical Counseling Coalition | Reclaiming the 'Priesthood of All Believers' in Biblical Counseling: A Reformation Legacy," Biblical Counseling Coalition, October 16, 2023, https://www.biblicalcounselingcoalition.org/2023/10/16/reclaiming-the-priesthood-of-all-believers-in-biblical-counseling-a-reformation-legacy/.

[121] Tan, Scalise, and Clinton, *Lay Counseling, Revised and Updated*, 29.

indispensable support and engagement of willing laity in the care ministry is essential. As

Howard Clinebell author of *Basic Types of Pastoral Counselling* said,

> A church's caring ministry to the community's lonely, sick, aging, bereaved, shutins, strangers, institutionalized, and a host of other suffering human beings, can be tripled or more by involving trained lay people in pastoral work. When dedicated lay people become informal pastors to their neighbors, associates, and fellow church members, they become the church-the body of Christ serving those in need.[122]

The unique aspect of empowering the laity to engage in lay ministry within the community extends beyond mere actions to the underlying motivations. It hinges on the profound impact of God's love message on Christians, which prompts them to be filled with the Holy Spirit. This divine influence compels even the most hesitant individuals to utilize their inherent gifts for the benefit of others, transforming those who have received care into compassionate caregivers.[123] As Romans 12:4-8 elucidates, within the body of Christ, each member possesses distinct roles and abilities, illustrating the unity amidst diversity. Hence, believers are called to utilize their unique gifts in proportion to the grace bestowed upon them, be it prophesying, serving, teaching, encouraging, contributing, leading, or showing mercy.

Every member of the body of Christ holds a significant role to fulfill. Enabling lay individuals to participate in the care ministry not only reflects the fundamental nature of the church as a caring community, rooted in the common priesthood of all believers but also provides a tangible outlet for those who wish to embody their faith in visible, practical ways. [124] As noted by Tan and Scalise, an increasing number of authors recognize the scriptural emphasis on the priesthood of all believers and advocate for the liberation of the laity, emphasizing the importance of lay caregiving and equipping all

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[122] Howard Clinebell, *Basic Types of Pastoral Counseling* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1966), 284.

[123] Clinebell, 284.

[124] Diane Detwiler-Zapp and William Caveness Dixon, *Lay Caregiving*, Creative Pastoral Care and Counseling Series (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982), 5.

believers for ministry.[125] Paul Stevens, in his work Liberating the Laity, underscores the overwhelming workload faced by churches, emphasizing the biblical mandate, as demonstrated in Ephesians 4:1-16, for all saints to be equipped for ministry and service.[126] In light of these insights, it is evident that empowering the laity in lay ministry not only aligns with biblical principles but also serves as a practical response to the needs of the church and the community. By enabling every believer to utilize their God-given gifts for the collective benefit, the church embodies its true nature as a unified body, functioning harmoniously for the advancement of God's kingdom.

As Christians, our calling extends beyond general ministry to encompass specific care ministry. The apostle Paul articulates this directive to all believers in Galatians 6:2, urging them to "Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ." This call to bear one another's burdens encompasses a broad spectrum of assistance, including counseling in its comprehensive sense of aiding individuals.[127] By fulfilling the law of Christ through such acts of love and service, we become vessels of God's grace and healing, echoing His own love for us.[128] In alignment with this directive, James 5:16 underscores the importance of confession and prayer within Christian community, highlighting their pivotal role in fostering healing and restoration. These elements are integral components of Christian caregiving, mirroring their significance in our relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.[129] Thus, as we engage in mutual support and prayerful intercession, we participate in the transformative work of God's grace in each other's lives.

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[125] Tan, Scalise, and Clinton, *Lay Counseling, Revised and Updated*, 29.

[126] R. Paul Stevens, *Liberating the Laity: Equipping All the Saints for Ministry* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1985), 21–41.

[127] Tan, Scalise, and Clinton, *Lay Counseling, Revised and Updated*, 32.

[128] Tan, Scalise, and Clinton, 27.

[129] Tan, Scalise, and Clinton, 32.

Numerous passages in the Bible underscore the imperative for believers to assist one another, emphasizing the significance of lay care ministry. Scriptures such as Romans 15:14, Colossians 3:16, and 1 Thessalonians 5:14 not only exhort all believers to admonish, encourage, and aid one another but also emphasize the vital role of spiritual qualities and wisdom in effective Christian counseling. While the call to ministry is universal, some individuals possess unique gifting in the realm of care ministry. C. Peter Wagner, as quoted by Tan and Scalise, defines the spiritual gift of exhortation as the ability to minister words of comfort, encouragement, and counsel to fellow believers, leading to their edification and healing. This role of caring for one another is grounded in Hebrews 3:13, which enjoins believers to "Exhort one another daily," highlighting the ongoing and communal nature of this ministry.[130]

4.2. Theological Foundation for Lay Counseling Ministry

Counseling embodies a structured and nurturing relationship designed to address problems or crises individuals encounter in their lives. In essence, it entails a dynamic interaction between clients and counselors aimed at fostering clarity, introspection, and consideration of potential courses of action. Christian counseling, however, carries a unique focus on guiding clients toward behaviors, thoughts, and emotions that align with the teachings and examples set forth by Jesus Christ. This distinctiveness underscores the vital importance of grounding Christian counseling in biblical principles. Without such foundational grounding in the word of God, Christian counseling risks diluting its singular identity and transformative power.[131] Hence, Christian counseling fundamentally

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[130] Tan, Scalise, and Clinton, 32.

[131] Melvin C. Blanchette, "Theological Foundations of Pastoral Counseling," in, Barry K. Estadt, Melvin Blanchette, and John R. Compton, *Pastoral Counseling* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1983), 19.

commences with an unwavering reliance on biblical truth, ensuring its adherence to the guiding precepts and wisdom imparted within Scripture.

In its broadest sense, counseling entails one individual aiding another in their journey towards wholeness in relation to God, others, and themselves. However, the focus of this paper is primarily on the counseling conducted by a staff therapist within the Church Counseling Center. Christian counseling involves integrating the truths of Scripture into the challenges faced by individuals. It encompasses empathetic listening, insightful discernment, practical strategies, and the careful application of God's Word directly or indirectly to the situations presented to the counselor. This process unfolds within a significant relationship marked by genuine compassion.[132] Together, the client and the counselor explore truth within the framework of faith and endeavor to apply it to daily life. Christian counseling encompasses various approaches, including pastoral counseling, psychology, discipleship, training, family counseling, career counseling, and other forms of assistance in the healing journey.

4.2.1. Assumptions

1. All truth, regardless of its source, ultimately stems from God, yet the Scriptures stand as the sole infallible guide for our beliefs and conduct, particularly in counseling. While insights from human sciences are valuable, they must always align with the authority of Scripture. Human beings, created in God's image, have their relationship with God, others, and themselves marred by rebellion against His authority and nature. The origin of all emotional and physical disorders can be traced back to Adam's sin, influencing the fallenness of mankind and perpetuating individual sinfulness, impacting our values and behaviors.

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[132] "Theological Foundations for Counseling in the Christian Counseling Center," *First Presbyterian Church of Columbia*, Theological Foundations for Counseling, January 31, 1994, 1.

2. Disorders may arise from various factors, including physiological imbalances, satanic influences, personal sinful choices, and the sinful actions of others. These disorders can cause spiritual, emotional, and intellectual harm to both individuals and their communities. Despite their contrary nature to God's purpose, He sovereignly uses them to accomplish His will, fostering godly character, maturity, and bringing glory to Himself. In situations where one's view of God and interpersonal relationships hinder embracing Christ's truths, counseling can aid in evangelism and discipleship, fostering Biblically ordered relationships and contributing to spiritual growth and maturity.

3. The scope of counseling extends beyond spiritual matters, encompassing the development of healthy relationships with oneself and others. God may choose to work through both immediate and long-term processes, including evangelism, counseling, discipleship, and fellowship, to bring about healing in individuals. Whether through human involvement or divine intervention, the ultimate goal remains the restoration of individuals to wholeness and alignment with God's purposes.[133]

4.2.2. Doctrine

1. Human Nature: Human beings possess various interconnected dimensions, including the physical, spiritual, emotional, relational, intellectual, and volitional aspects. When one dimension is affected, it impacts the others as well. Sin has tainted all these dimensions since the fall, continuing to exert a negative influence on individuals. Even after receiving forgiveness, the consequences of sin may persist, contaminating the entirety of a person's being.

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[133] "Theological Foundations for Counseling in the Christian Counseling Center," 1–3.

2. Scripture and Science: Scripture serves as the ultimate authority for truth, guiding counselors in addressing human problems. While Scripture doesn't directly address every aspect of human life, insights from the developing human sciences can complement biblical principles. Counselors must diligently study both Scripture and scientific knowledge to effectively aid individuals in counseling sessions, integrating these perspectives appropriately.

3. Regeneration: Through regeneration, individuals experience a transformation, becoming new creatures in Christ. Although their personalities may remain unchanged, believers are motivated by the Holy Spirit toward Christlikeness, striving for growth and maturity through obedience and the Spirit's empowerment. While imperfections persist, believers are driven by a newfound desire to align with God's will.

4. Justification and Sanctification: Accepting salvation results in justification, where individuals are declared righteous in Christ. Though believers may still struggle with sin and deficiencies, they are fully accepted by God and no longer under condemnation. Sanctification begins at salvation, involving the growth and purification of every aspect of a believer's being, facilitated by the Holy Spirit, Scripture, and the Christian community.

5. Teaching and Discipleship: The church and believers play a vital role in teaching and discipling individuals to understand God's nature, their identity in Him, and His expectations. Through teaching, discipleship, and counseling, believers are encouraged and guided in their journey of growth in grace and conformity to Christ. Counseling serves as one avenue among many in this process of spiritual development and maturity.[134]

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[134] "Theological Foundations for Counseling in the Christian Counseling Center," 2–3.

4.3. Goals of Counseling

In Christian communities, the objectives of counseling often present a diverse and sometimes unclear landscape. Counselors have articulated numerous counseling goals, leading to challenges in establishing clear objectives. Despite these difficulties, reaching a consensus on counseling goals is imperative due to the significant potential of counseling as a ministry within churches. It is essential for participants to navigate through the complexities and arrive at some form of mutual agreement regarding the desired outcomes of counseling sessions. By doing so, the effectiveness of counseling as a transformative tool within the church context can be realized, facilitating spiritual growth, emotional healing, and relational restoration among individuals seeking guidance and support.

4.3.1. Four Important Goals

Through the work of experienced counselors, (As the goals are discussed, the counsellors and researchers who have supported each goal will be referenced) four primary objectives of counseling become evident: restoring one's connection with God, fostering wholesome relationships with others, cultivating a positive self-image, and deepening one's devotion to God. It's notable that some Christians prioritize personal happiness over spiritual growth. However, solely pursuing happiness without aligning with Christ's teachings may lead to a superficial sense of contentment.[135] True fulfillment is found in embracing God's truth, as it invites the Holy Spirit to infuse individuals with divine grace, ultimately guiding them towards genuine happiness and spiritual fulfillment.

Firstly, counseling aims to facilitate the restoration of the counselee's connection with God. Many individuals undergoing counseling may find themselves distant from

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[135] Larry Crabb, *Effective Biblical Counseling* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Pub. House, 1977), 20.

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God, questioning His love despite having accepted Him and experienced His Spirit. Some may harbor feelings of resentment or have withdrawn from their relationship with God altogether. A primary objective of counseling is to guide counselees back to God, fostering a renewed sense of intimacy and connection. To achieve this, counselors must effectively present Christ to the counselees and help them recognize the fractures in their relationship with God. Additionally, counselors should encourage self-acceptance and love within the counselees, instilling faith and confidence in place of doubt and fear. Through these efforts, counseling serves as a pathway for individuals to rediscover spiritual abundance and a deeper connection with God.[136]

Secondly, the crucial aspect of counseling involves teaching counselees how to cultivate healthy relationships with others. Often, individuals facing emotional struggles find it challenging to maintain positive and close connections with those around them. By fostering healthy relationships, counselees can gain a deeper understanding of themselves, experience healing from past wounds, identify their behavioral patterns, and acquire the skills necessary for effective communication and relationship-building. To address this need, counselors must familiarize themselves with psychological theories that align with biblical principles, allowing them to offer guidance rooted in both empirical knowledge and spiritual truth. Through this integration, counselors can assist counselees in navigating interpersonal dynamics, fostering resilience, and fostering meaningful connections with others in accordance with God's design for relational harmony.[137]

Thirdly, in counseling, individuals undergo a process of self-acceptance and internal reconciliation, addressing deep-seated issues within themselves. Cloud and

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[136] Seward Hiltner, "Psychology and the Church," *Pastoral Psychology* 21, no. 1 (January 1, 1970): 19, https://doi.org/10.1007/BF01759903.

[137] Henry Cloud and John Sims Townsend, *12 "Christian" Beliefs That Can Drive You Crazy: Relief from False Assumptions* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Pub. House, 1995), 10.

Townsend observed that Christians well-versed in the Bible often experience heightened distress when grappling with faith-related struggles, leading to self-blame and exacerbating emotional distress. This tendency to devalue oneself, common among those experiencing depression, manifests through negative self-talk and a bleak outlook on the future. Additionally, Christian clients may disregard their own needs, perceiving self-neglect as a virtue. However, contrary to this belief, the Bible emphasizes the value of individuals and their needs. Backus and Chapian highlight the counseling goal of guiding clients towards a true understanding of their inner struggles and the world around them. By addressing these issues, counseling enables clients to cultivate a deeper relationship with themselves and ultimately find resolution to their challenges. [138] Through this process, individuals can experience personal growth and a greater sense of self-worth.

Fourthly, A key aim of Christian counseling is for individuals to ultimately commit themselves to God. Contrary to popular belief, the goal of counseling is not centered on achieving personal happiness, but rather on pleasing God. Just as Paul sought to please God in every aspect of his life, believers are called to devote themselves to God's service. [139] Hebrews 13:15-16 underscores the believer's dual role as a priest: offering worship to God and rendering service to others. Therefore, the essence of Christian counseling lies in fostering a deep commitment to God. When individuals regain a close relationship with God, others, and themselves through counseling, they are inclined to make the conscious decision to worship and dedicate themselves to God's service. This commitment to God is integral to spiritual growth and maturity. As individuals progress in their journey, they are encouraged to engage in discipleship training or participate in Bible studies within their home church, further nurturing their spiritual development.

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[138] William D. Backus and Marie Chapian, *Telling Yourself the Truth* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Bethany House Publishers, 2000), 37.

[139] Crabb, *Effective Biblical Counseling*, 21.

The main objective of Christian counseling centers on achieving maturity in Christ, which entails embodying Christ-like qualities and adhering to God's standards in all aspects of life. Maturing believers demonstrate behaviors and attitudes aligned with Biblical principles, guided by the influence of the Holy Spirit. As individuals mature, they gain a deeper understanding of significant life events, their surroundings, and their own personality traits. The grip of temptation, sinfulness, personal limitations, and past experiences diminishes as they progress toward spiritual maturity. However, with growth comes a heightened awareness of personal shortcomings, emotional wounds, and the need for greater dependence on God. Counseling serves as a tool to aid individuals in their journey toward liberation from the effects of sin and ignorance.[140] Through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, individuals are enabled to cultivate an intimate relationship with God, foster godly relationships within the church and society, and live out an authentic Christian life in accordance with Biblical principles.

4.4. Basic Principles of Christian Counseling.

Tan proposed and outlined fourteen fundamental principles of effective counseling and psychotherapy from a biblical perspective. These principles are not only grounded in empirical research but also align with counseling theories that resonate with biblical teachings.[141] Below is a summary of these fourteen principles:

1. Effective counseling in the Christian context acknowledges the crucial role of the Holy Spirit as a counselor or comforter, as outlined in John 14:16-17. It is understood that during every counseling session, there are three active participants: the counselor, the client, and the Holy Spirit. This perspective

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[140] "Theological Foundations for Counseling in the Christian Counseling Center," 3–4.

[141] Siang-Yang Tan, *Counseling and Psychotherapy: A Christian Perspective*, Second edition (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, a division of Baker Publishing Group, 2022), 407.

emphasizes the spiritual dimension of counseling, recognizing the presence and guidance of the Holy Spirit throughout the therapeutic process.

2. According to 2 Timothy 3:16-17, the Bible serves as the foundational guide for addressing life's challenges. It underscores the importance of learning to interpret and apply biblical principles accurately and effectively. However, it's essential to recognize that while the Bible offers invaluable wisdom for counseling, it does not provide an exhaustive manual for every counseling scenario. This perspective emphasizes the necessity of integrating biblical teachings with other counseling approaches and insights to address the complexity of human experiences comprehensively.

3. Prayer holds a central role in biblical assistance, as emphasized in James 5:16. Its incorporation during counseling sessions necessitates discernment and appropriate timing. This perspective underscores the importance of engaging in prayer as a deliberate and discerning practice, ensuring that it is integrated into the session in a manner that aligns with the client's needs and the therapeutic process.

4. The primary objective of counseling is to nurture clients towards becoming disciples or mentors themselves, in line with the Great Commission. Counselors are called to fulfill this commission by guiding clients towards spiritual growth and empowerment, ultimately fostering a transformative journey towards becoming disciples who can then positively impact others.

5. The effectiveness of a lay Christian counselor is significantly influenced by their personal qualities, as indicated in Romans 15:14 and Colossians 3:16. Spiritual maturity is paramount for effective counseling, alongside traits such as self-awareness, empathy, objectivity, interpersonal skills, experience, genuine faith, competence, reverence for God, honesty, availability, and a willingness to refer challenging cases, as exemplified in Exodus 18:21-22. These qualities collectively

contribute to the counselor's ability to provide meaningful support and guidance to those seeking assistance.

6. The success of counseling hinges greatly on the attitudes, motivations, and willingness of the client to seek and engage with help. These factors play a pivotal role in determining the effectiveness of counseling interventions. It emphasizes the importance of the client's active participation and commitment to the therapeutic process in achieving positive outcomes.

7. The dynamic between the counselor and the client stands as a crucial element influencing the efficacy of counseling. Factors such as empathy, respect, authenticity, confrontation, and truthfulness contribute to the quality of this relationship. It's essential to recognize that merely engaging in conversation is insufficient for fostering change; instead, it necessitates processes like confession, reconciliation, and forgiveness, underscoring the importance of deeper relational aspects in facilitating therapeutic growth and transformation.

8. Effective counseling is characterized by a cyclical process that progresses through exploration, understanding, and action phases. Crabb offers a comprehensive and biblically grounded model of this counseling process, which unfolds across seven distinct stages.[142]

Stage 1: counselor helps client identify problem feelings

Stage 2: counselor helps client identify problem behaviors

Stage 3: focus is on identifying client's problem thinking

Stage 4: counselor teaches right, biblical thinking

Stage 5: secure a commitment from client to such biblical thinking and obedience to the Lord and His Word

Stage 6: client is encouraged to plan and carry out biblical or right behavior

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[142] Tan, 407–9.

Stage 7: client can identify and enjoy Spirit-controlled feelings of security and significance.[143]

9. While directive or nouthetic counseling holds significance within Christian counseling, it's crucial to maintain flexibility in counseling style or approach.

10. The model maintains adaptability concerning the selection of specific counseling techniques or methods. Scripture serves as the primary guide for discerning and evaluating the suitability of these approaches.

11. Successful counseling necessitates an awareness and sensitivity to cultural diversity.

12. In addition to traditional counseling methods, outreach and prevention techniques play a significant role in enhancing the effectiveness of lay Christian counseling. Jeffrey Prater put forth six recommendations aimed at integrating lay counselor training within broader psychosocial interventions.[144] This approach aims to align counseling training more closely with other outreach initiatives within the church community:

First, To assess role of environmental stressors in emotional problems

Second, In technique of community outreach and empowerment

Third, In cultural awareness and sensitivity

Fourth, To be aware and make use of existing support systems within the churches

Fifth, In how to develop new support systems within the church when needed

Sixth, To communicate more actively and regularly with others, especially leaders of other outreach ministries in the church.[145]

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[143] Tan, Scalise, and Clinton, *Lay Counseling, Revised and Updated*, 52–54.
[144] Tan, *Counseling and Psychotherapy*, 409–11.
[145] Tan, Scalise, and Clinton, *Lay Counseling, Revised and Updated*, 57–58.

13. Crisis counseling holds significance as it frequently addresses crisis events within lay counseling. Eric Scalise, in his training program titled the ABC's of Crisis Intervention, outlines six steps for effectively managing crisis situations during counseling sessions.[146]

    Step 1. Achieve a connection with the other person

    Step 2. Break Down the problem

    Step 3. Commit to a plan of action.

    Step 4. Document the Interaction.

    Step 5. Explain the Plan of Action

    Step 6. Follow up as soon as possible.[147]

14. Lay counselors should recognize the boundaries of their knowledge and skills when assisting individuals with various needs and challenges.[148]

In conclusion, the principles outlined by Tan provide a comprehensive framework for effective counseling and psychotherapy from a biblical perspective. These principles underscore the importance of integrating spirituality, prayer, and biblical wisdom into the counseling process while also recognizing the importance of flexibility, cultural sensitivity, and outreach efforts. The cyclical nature of effective counseling, as described by Crabb, emphasizes the progression from exploration to understanding to action, guided by biblical truth. Additionally, the significance of crisis intervention and the recognition of the limitations of lay counselors further enhance the understanding of the counseling process. By observing to these principles, lay Christian counselors can effectively guide individuals towards spiritual growth, empowerment, and transformation, fulfilling the overarching goal of making disciples and positively impacting the lives of others within the church community and beyond.

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146 Tan, *Counseling and Psychotherapy*, 411.

147 Tan, Scalise, and Clinton, *Lay Counseling, Revised and Updated*, 59–60.

148 Tan, *Counseling and Psychotherapy*, 411.

4.5. Christian Faith in Clinical Practice.

In clinical practice, the integration of Christian faith, as exemplified by Tan involves bringing religious and spiritual elements into the therapy room. This approach, also termed professional integration aims to merge theological principles with psychological techniques to conduct counseling and psychotherapy that is centered on Christ, grounded in biblical teachings, and guided by the Holy Spirit. Over recent years, there has been significant growth in this area, along with the broader field of religiously and spiritually oriented therapy. Moreover, contemporary approaches like acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT), mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (MBCT), and dialectical behavior therapy (DBT) have incorporated mindfulness and acceptance techniques with spiritual origins in Zen Buddhism and Christian contemplative traditions.[149]

4.5.1. Implicit and explicit Integration in Christian Counseling and Psychotherapy

Christian therapy or counseling has been called consecrated coun- seling by Rodger Bufford who provided the following distinctives of such Christian counseling: "Counseling is truly Christian when the counselor has a deep faith; counsels with excellence; holds a Christian world view; is guided by Christian values in choosing the means, goals, and motivations of counseling; actively seeks the presence and work of God; and actively utilizes spiritual interven- tions and resources within ethical guidelines." In this context of Christian or consecrated counseling and psychotherapy, I have described two major models of integrating Christian faith in clini- cal practice, as two ends of a continuum: Implicit integration and explicit integration, with the following descriptions: "Implicit integration... refers to a more covert approach that does not initiate the discussion of religious or spiritual issues and does not openly, directly or

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[149] Tan, 413.

systematically use spiritual resources. Explicit integration refers to a more overt approach that directly and systematically deals with spiritual or religious issues in therapy, and uses spiritual resources like prayer, Scripture and sacred texts, referrals to church or other religious groups or lay counselors, and other religious practices." A Christian therapist will engage in implicit integration or explicit integration or move along the continuum between them, depending on the problems, needs, and preferences of the client, as well as the personality, inclination, and training of the Christian therapist.[150] Both implicit integration and explicit integration are equally substantial and important. It is intentional and prayerful integration that is crucial, whether it involves implicit integration or explicit integration or both. Integration in clinical practice should be conducted in dependence on the Holy Spirit, in a professionally competent, ethically responsible, and clinically sensitive way, with clear informed consent from the client.[151] More detailed description of implicit integration, and then, explicit integration is explained below.

In the realm of Christian therapy, Rodger Bufford in his article *"Consecrated Counseling: Reflections on the Distinctives of Christian Counseling,"* coined the term "consecrated counselling" and outlined its distinctives. According to Bufford, "Counseling is truly Christian when the counselor has a deep faith; counsels with excellence; holds a Christian world view; is guided by Christian values in choosing the means, goals, and motivations of counseling; actively seeks the presence and work of God; and actively utilizes spiritual interventions and resources within ethical guidelines."[152] In the context of Christian counseling and psychotherapy, two major

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[150] Siang-Yang Tan, *A Christian Approach to Counseling and Psychotherapy: Christ-Centered, Biblically-Based, and Spirit-Filled* (Eugene ; Oregon: Cascade Books, 2022), 20–21, https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&db=nlabk&AN=3344578.

[151] Tan, 21.

[152] Rodger K. Bufford, "Consecrated Counseling: Reflections on the Distinctives of Christian Counseling," *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 25, no. 1 (1997): 120, https://doi.org/10.1177/009164719702500111.

models of integrating Christian faith in clinical practice exist on a continuum: implicit integration and explicit integration.

Implicit integration involves a more subtle approach that does not initially broach religious or spiritual matters and does not overtly utilize spiritual resources. On the other hand, explicit integration is a more direct approach that systematically addresses religious or spiritual issues in therapy and utilizes spiritual resources such as prayer, Scripture, referrals to religious groups or lay counselors, and other religious practices. Christian therapists may employ implicit or explicit integration, or transition between them, depending on client needs, preferences, therapist characteristics, and training.[153]

Both implicit and explicit integration hold equal significance, with intentional and prayerful integration being crucial, whether through implicit or explicit means, or a combination of both. Integration in clinical practice should be carried out in reliance on the Holy Spirit, maintaining professional competence, ethical responsibility, and clinical sensitivity, with explicit informed consent from the client.[154] Now, lets look to a more detailed exploration of implicit integration followed by explicit integration.

4.5.1.1 Implicit Integration in Christian Therapy

Though implicit integration operates in a more understated manner, it remains a crucial method for incorporating Christian faith into clinical practice. This approach hinges on a deliberate reliance on the Holy Spirit for guidance and healing during therapy sessions. Christian therapists employing implicit integration silently pray for their clients' well-being and for the Holy Spirit's intervention to bring profound healing, while

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[153] Tan, *A Christian Approach to Counseling and Psychotherapy*, 20–21.

[154] Siang-Yang Tan, "Principled, Professional, and Personal Integration and Beyond: Further Reflections on the Past and Future," *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 40, no. 2 (2012): 146–49, https://doi.org/10.1177/009164711204000212.

demonstrating genuine love, empathy, and compassion. They uphold biblical values and convictions without imposing them on clients or discussing them explicitly.

Implicit integration proves particularly beneficial when working with non-believing clients or those uninterested in discussing spiritual matters or utilizing spiritual resources such as prayer or Scripture. It also fits well with counseling Christian clients experiencing spiritual struggles or who prefer a quieter, more personal spirituality. Over time, clients may shift toward a more explicit integration approach, showing interest in addressing spiritual issues directly and using spiritual resources systematically, with the therapist's guidance and informed consent.[155] Therapists practicing from psychodynamic, psychoanalytic, or person-centered perspectives may find implicit integration better aligned with their approaches, given their non-directive and reflective nature. Conversely, explicit integration may suit therapists practicing from cognitive-behavioral and humanistic-existential perspectives, which tend to be more directive.[156]

Tan in his book, "*A Christian Approach to Counseling and Psychotherapy*" mentions about Jeffrey Terrell challenges Tan's definition of implicit integration, proposing an intentional incarnational approach to integration in relational psychodynamic psychotherapy. Terrell suggests that this approach, usually seen as implicit integration, can also be viewed as "explicit" integration due to its deliberate use of the therapeutic relationship to facilitate profound client change. He argues that this approach, regardless of its explicit or implicit verbal expression, embodies explicit integration in its affirmation of the client's worthiness of love, acknowledgment of imperfections, and acceptance despite shortcomings. Terrell stresses that relational

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[155] Tan, *A Christian Approach to Counseling and Psychotherapy*, 21–22.

[156] I. Reed Payne, Allen E. Bergin, and Patricia E. Loftus, "A Review of Attempts to Integrate Spiritual and Standard Psychotherapy Techniques," *Journal of Psychotherapy Integration* 2, no. 3 (1992): 171–92, https://doi.org/10.1037/h0101254.

psychodynamic Christian therapy should be seen as both explicit and implicit integration, embodying the gospel story through deliberate and incarnational practice.[157]

Similarly, Tan mentions about Steven Rogers describes focusing on the therapeutic process and the present moment within object relations psychotherapy as a deeply spiritual intervention reflecting God's interaction with humanity.[158] Bland and Strawn in their book "*Christianity & Psychoanalysis*" also explore relational psychoanalytic approaches, including attachment-based therapies, as instances of how Christian faith can be integrated into psychoanalytic therapy, providing insights into a fresh integrative dialogue between Christianity and psychoanalysis.[159]

4.5.1.2 Explicit Integration in Christian Therapy

Explicit integration represents a more direct approach to infusing Christian faith into clinical practice. Therapists practicing explicit integration in Christian counseling and psychotherapy engage verbally, directly, and systematically with spiritual and religious matters, utilizing spiritual resources such as prayer, Scripture, and referrals to religious groups. This approach also involves integrating psychological therapy with spiritual guidance to some extent within the therapeutic context.

However, it is imperative for therapists to conduct explicit integration in a manner that is clinically sensitive, ethically responsible, and professionally competent. Overzealous or insensitive therapists risk misusing explicit integration by imposing their spiritual interventions and religious values on clients without obtaining informed

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[157] Tan, *A Christian Approach to Counseling and Psychotherapy*, 22.

[158] Tan, 23.

[159] Earl D. Bland and Brad D. Strawn, *Christianity & Psychoanalysis: A New Conversation*, Christian Association for Psychological Studies Bks (Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Academic, an imprint of InterVarsity Press, 2014), 22–36, http://site.ebrary.com/id/10863014.

consent.[160] Adherence to ethical guidelines is essential in the ethical practice of explicit integration in Christian therapy.

Nelson and Wilson Authors of "*The Ethics of Sharing Religious Faith in Psychotherapy*" outline three fundamental practices for ethically incorporating religious faith into therapy: (a) Therapists should focus on clinical problems that could benefit from religious or spiritual interventions, (b) Respect the client's belief system, and (c) Obtain informed consent from the client to use religious or spiritual resources.[161]

During the initial intake interview or first session, therapists should sensitively discuss with the client their preferences regarding spiritual and religious issues to determine whether to adopt an implicit or explicit integration approach in therapy. Questions about the client's religious affiliation and the importance of religious or spiritual issues in therapy can aid in this discussion. If the client is uninterested in addressing such issues, therapists should honor their preferences and opt for implicit integration. Conversely, if the client prefers explicit integration, therapists should obtain informed consent, ideally in written form, and ensure the therapy contract includes open discussion of religious or spiritual issues and the use of spiritual resources.

If therapists feel inadequately trained or experienced in employing explicit integration, they should refer clients to other Christian therapists with more expertise in conducting explicit integration in Christian therapy. Implicit and explicit integration are not mutually exclusive; therapists may employ a range of approaches along the continuum, adjusting their approach based on the client's needs and level of openness. Therapists should respond to clients in an appropriate, empathetic, and sensitive manner. Terrell highlighted in Tan's writing that a relational psychodynamic approach, while

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[160] Tan, *A Christian Approach to Counseling and Psychotherapy*, 23–24.

[161] Alan A. Nelson and William P. Wilson, "The Ethics of Sharing Religious Faith in Psychotherapy," *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 12, no. 1 (1984): 15–23, https://doi.org/10.1177/009164718401200102.

primarily implicit, can also be considered "explicit" in its intentional and incarnational integration, even if not always direct or verbal in addressing religious issues.[162]

Explicit integration in Christian therapy encompasses various components, including using religious and spiritual resources in therapy, addressing spiritual issues, and promoting intrapersonal integration and spirituality development in both therapist and client.

4.5.1.2.1 Explicit Integration: Use of Religious and Spiritual Resources in Therapy

A significant aspect of explicit integration involves the deliberate and structured utilization of religious and spiritual resources within therapy. These resources play a crucial role in spiritually oriented or religiously accommodative therapies. Tan highlights three primary examples of such resources in his book: prayer, Scripture, and referrals to religious groups.[163] Specifically within the context of explicit integration in Christian counseling and psychotherapy, these resources are employed openly and directly to facilitate therapeutic progress and spiritual growth in clients.

(a) PRAYER

Prayer serves as a vital spiritual tool in explicit integration within therapy, offering various forms such as meditative, ritualistic, petitionary, colloquial, and intercessory prayer. These encompass both personal and communal expressions of faith, fostering a deeper connection with the divine. Richard Foster delineates twenty-one prayer types aimed at inward transformation, upward intimacy, and outward ministry, providing a comprehensive framework for spiritual engagement. Similarly, the ACTS acronym encapsulates major prayer types, guiding Christians in their prayer practices.

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[162] Tan, *A Christian Approach to Counseling and Psychotherapy*, 24–25.
[163] Tan, *Counseling and Psychotherapy*, 417.

In Christian therapy, diverse prayer forms are utilized, including quiet contemplation, verbalized petitions, and inner healing prayers. These prayers are employed judiciously and sensitively in response to client needs and spiritual guidance. Christian contemplative prayer, emphasizing receptive communion with God, offers a path to spiritual growth within therapy. However, it's essential to view prayer not merely as a therapeutic technique but as an integral aspect of spiritual life, fostering a transformative relationship with God.[164]

Joshua Knabb and Thomas Frederick authors of the book called "Contemplative prayer for christians with chronic worry: an eight-week program" have developed an eight-week Christian contemplative prayer program, drawing from biblical principles and historical practices to aid those struggling with chronic worry.[165] This program emphasizes contemplative prayer as a means of overcoming anxiety, offering daily exercises and various prayer methods. Similarly, inner healing prayer, designed to address painful memories with divine intervention, emerges as a valuable resource in therapy. However, its application requires careful clinical consideration and client consent, particularly in cases involving substance abuse or severe mental health issues. Overall, prayer plays a multifaceted role in explicit integration within Christian therapy, offering avenues for spiritual growth, healing, and transformation.[166] Through diverse prayer practices, therapists can guide clients towards deeper spiritual engagement and emotional healing, always mindful of ethical considerations and client well-being.

Tan has devised a seven-step framework for inner healing prayer, which was initially outlined in *"The Holy Spirit and Counseling Ministry,"*.[167] Unlike some other

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[164] Tan, *A Christian Approach to Counseling and Psychotherapy*, 26–27.

[165] Joshua J. Knabb and Thomas V. Frederick, *Contemplative Prayer for Christians with Chronic Worry: An Eight-Week Program*, 1 online resource vols. (New York, NY: Routledge, 2017), https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&db=nlabk&AN=1470115.

[166] Tan, *A Christian Approach to Counseling and Psychotherapy*, 28–30.

[167] Siang-Yang Tan, "The Holy Spirit and Counseling Ministry.," *Christian Journal of Psychilogy and Counseling*, 7, 3 (1992): 8–11.

approaches, this model does not prescribe a set script or specific visualizations of Jesus for the client. Instead, the emphasis lies on prayer and the presence of the Holy Spirit during the inner healing process, with a focus on allowing the Spirit to minister to the client as guided.

The seven steps for inner healing prayer are as follows:

1. Commence with a prayer for protection against evil and request the empowering and healing presence of the Holy Spirit to guide the session.

2. Assist the client in achieving a relaxed state, typically through brief relaxation techniques such as slow, deep breathing, calming self-talk, or visualization of pleasant imagery, prayer, and Biblical scenes.

3. Direct the client to concentrate on a past painful event or traumatic experience, encouraging them to deeply feel the associated emotions such as pain, hurt, or anger.

4. Through prayer, invoke the presence of the Lord and the Holy Spirit's healing grace to minister to the client's needs, which may manifest in various forms such as Jesus imagery, healing imagery, music, Scripture, or a sense of warmth and comfort.

5. Quietly wait for the Lord to minister to the client, intervening or speaking only when prompted by the Holy Spirit. To maintain rapport with the client, gently inquire about their experiences periodically.

6. Conclude the session with a closing prayer.

7. Engage in debriefing and discussion with the client regarding their inner healing prayer experience.[168]

This model prioritizes the client's connection with the divine and allows space for the Holy Spirit to lead the healing process organically.

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[168] Siang-Yang Tan, "Inner Healing Prayer," *Christian Counseling Today*, 11, 4 (2003): 20–22.

If deemed suitable and with the client's willingness, homework assignments involving inner healing prayer can be prescribed, allowing clients to integrate the practice into their personal prayer routines at home. This seven-step inner healing prayer model remains flexible and can be adjusted or customized as needed. Some clients may encounter challenges in following all seven steps, particularly those who struggle to recall or visualize their painful memories. In such cases, clients can opt to narrate their experiences verbally and engage in prayer over them. Alternatively, therapists can simulate the distressing situation with the client and conclude with prayer. Clients may require assurance that God's grace will sustain them, even if significant healing does not occur immediately following inner healing prayer.[169]

Additionally, the significance and process of forgiveness in the journey of inner healing should be highlighted and addressed. There is a pressing need for more rigorously controlled research to evaluate the efficacy of inner healing prayer specifically for addressing past painful memories or experiences.[170] This focus not only on prayer involving Jesus imagery for present or future-oriented concerns but also on its effectiveness in facilitating healing from past traumas.

Another form of prayer worth noting is prayer for deliverance from evil spirits, sometimes referred to as exorcism.[171] This type of prayer may be necessary if a client exhibits symptoms of being possessed or oppressed by demons or malevolent spirits. Many Christian therapists may opt to refer such clients to specialists in deliverance ministries or pastoral counselors within local churches, as these individuals often possess more expertise or training in this area. However, it's crucial to acknowledge the controversial nature of this practice, which may entail legal risks. If deemed necessary

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[169] Tan, *A Christian Approach to Counseling and Psychotherapy*, 30–31.

[170] Tan, 31.

[171] Tan in, Edward P. Shafranske, *Religion and the Clinical Practice of Psychology*, 1st ed (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 1996), 365–87.

and with the client's informed consent, a Christian therapist may offer deliverance prayer, commanding any malevolent presence to depart from the individual permanently.

Prayer, while a valuable tool, also carries potential risks if misused or applied superficially in therapy. There is a danger in utilizing prayer as a means to avoid addressing deeper psychological issues, a phenomenon referred to as spiritual bypassing. Consequently, some Christian therapists advocate for cautious yet nonjudgmental integration of prayer and Scripture in therapy sessions. Nevertheless, prayer, particularly inner healing prayer, can be employed effectively with clients who are deeply spiritual or religious, such as orthodox or conservative Christians, who may prefer explicit incorporation of prayer and Scripture in therapy. It's essential, however, to respect the autonomy of Christian clients who may not wish to integrate prayer into their therapeutic process, especially those who identify as more liberal, Catholic, or younger, although a significant majority of first-time Christian clients express a desire for audible prayer in counseling.

Before introducing spiritual resources like prayer into therapy, it's imperative to assess the client's level of religious commitment. Research indicates that clients with a strong religious commitment tend to experience greater improvement in their presenting issues when receiving explicitly religious interventions in Christian therapy compared to those with lower religious commitment. Studies exploring the relationship between prayer and subjective well-being have identified certain prayer types—adoration, thanksgiving, and reception with a contemplative attitude—as positively associated with well-being, particularly when they are more focused on God than on the self. Additionally, prayer functions such as seeking guidance and expressing gratitude have been highlighted as particularly effective in the coping process according to participants' reports.[172]

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[172] Tan, *Counseling and Psychotherapy*, 424–26.

Prayer can be classified into inward prayer (self-focused), outward prayer (other-focused), and upward prayer (divine-focused) categories. While all three types are associated with internal dialogue, upward prayer has been found to mediate the relationship between internal dialogue and well-being. In studies comparing prayer to other forms of cognitive engagement, participants in inward and outward prayer conditions reported feeling more resolved, peaceful, and content, with greater cognitive understanding of personal issues.[173] Authors like Spilka and Ladd have contributed significantly to the scientific exploration of the psychology of prayer in their book called "*The Psychology of Prayer: A Scientific Approach.*"[174]

(b) SCRIPTURE

The utilization of Scripture or the Bible stands as a significant example of integrating religious and spiritual resources into Christian therapy, particularly evident in Christian Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT). The Bible, regarded as God's inspired word, holds various purposes in Christian therapy, including providing comfort, guidance, cognitive restructuring, character development, purification, conviction, and healing. It can be utilized indirectly by referencing biblical truths, generally by alluding to teachings or examples without citation, or specifically by citing particular verses.[175] Scripture may be engaged with through reading, meditation, memorization, study, or assigned as homework.

Fernando Garzon the author of an article *"Interventions That Apply Scripture in Psychotherapy,"* has outlined therapeutic interventions incorporating Scripture in therapy, alongside a Christian devotional meditation technique addressing anxiety through Scriptural truth meditation, focusing on God's character or specific biblical

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[173] Tan, *A Christian Approach to Counseling and Psychotherapy*, 34.

[174] Bernard Spilka and Kevin L. Ladd, *The Psychology of Prayer: A Scientific Approach*, 1 online resource vols. (New York: Guilford Press, 2013), http://site.ebrary.com/id/10599056.

[175] Tan, *A Christian Approach to Counseling and Psychotherapy*, 34.

passages.[176] Mindfulness-based approaches have also been adapted for conservative Christians, employing God-centered breath meditation and loving-kindness meditation. The use of Scripture is particularly pertinent in Christian CBT, targeting the restructuring of dysfunctional thinking patterns, which may involve unbiblical or sinful assumptions. Instead of standard secular CBT questions, inquiries rooted in Scripture challenge distorted thinking, prompting considerations of what the Bible or God might communicate about a given issue.[177] While there are resources providing quick Scripture references for counseling, careful biblical interpretation is crucial.

While leveraging Scripture in therapy presents numerous benefits, it necessitates a thoughtful approach to prevent unintended consequences. Therapists should reflect on their motivations for incorporating Scripture, considering the objectives they aim to achieve and potential obstacles clients might encounter. This introspective process ensures that Scripture is seamlessly integrated into therapy sessions, fostering sensitivity and effectiveness while avoiding shallow or harmful applications.

(c) **REFERALS TO RELIGIOUS GROUP**Refering clients to religious organizations aligned with their beliefs constitutes another significant aspect of integrating spiritual resources into Christian therapy. These groups, such as churches or parachurch organizations, offer support, fellowship, and prayer conducive to the client's healing and personal development. They also aid in facilitating a smoother transition during the therapy termination phase. These religious entities encompass various gatherings, including small groups, Bible studies, recovery programs, and prayer circles, among others. Additionally, churches and parachurch organizations frequently offer lay counseling services at no cost, providing clients with further support and assistance,

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[176] Fernando Garzon, "Interventions That Apply Scripture in Psychotherapy," *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 33, no. 2 (2005): 113–21, https://doi.org/10.1177/009164710503300204.

[177] Tan, *A Christian Approach to Counseling and Psychotherapy*, 35–36.

particularly if professional therapy is financially inaccessible. [178] The lay counselors within these religious settings are typically rigorously selected, trained, and supervised, offering valuable and efficient services. Referring clients to religious groups should be approached with sensitivity and collaboration, ensuring it aligns with the client's preferences and needs.[179]

In essence, integrating clients into religious communities can enhance their therapeutic journey by providing a supportive environment that complements the counseling process. By leveraging the resources and services offered by these religious organizations, therapists can extend the scope of care beyond individual sessions, promoting holistic healing and growth. This collaborative approach ensures that clients receive comprehensive support tailored to their spiritual and emotional needs, fostering a deeper sense of connection and belonging within their faith community.

4.5.1.2.2 Explicit Integration: Dealing with Spiritual Issues in Therapy

In the realm of explicit integration in therapy, addressing spiritual concerns becomes a significant component. Many individuals seek therapeutic assistance due to issues with spiritual or moral dimensions, necessitating an open and direct approach to these matters with the client's full consent. An initial step involves conducting a thorough spiritual assessment during the intake interview questions like whether the client identifies as religious or spiritual, their affiliation, and how their problem relates to spirituality are crucial in understanding the client's perspective.

Moreover, spiritual and religious themes can surface later in therapy, encompassing existential dilemmas such as finding life's meaning, grappling with

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[178] Siang-Yang Tan and John Ortberg, *Shepherding God's People: A Guide to Faithful and Fruitful Pastoral Ministry* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, a division of Baker Publishing Group, 2019), 143–46.

[179] Tan, *Counseling and Psychotherapy*, 428–29.

mortality fears, and aligning with authentic values. Specific issues like doubts, guilt struggles, and religious conflicts may arise, along with negative experiences like toxic faith or religious dependency.[180] Gary Collins in his writings outlines various spiritual issues often encountered in Christian therapy, emphasizing the need for therapists to navigate these discussions with empathy, respect, and without imposing personal beliefs.[181]

Understanding the right timing is pivotal, especially in addressing sensitive spiritual struggles. Therapists must follow the client's pace and exercise discretion, refraining from challenging deeply held beliefs prematurely.[182] Sensitivity to clients from diverse religious and cultural backgrounds is essential, requiring therapists to broaden their understanding of various faith traditions. Additionally, therapists should be wary of countertransference pitfalls, such as engaging in doctrinal debates or projecting their own beliefs onto clients, as highlighted by Robert Lovinger in his book *"Working with Religious Issues in Theory,"*[183] These insights underscore the delicate balance therapists must maintain when addressing spiritual issues in therapy.

4.5.1.2.3. Explicit Integration: Fostering Intrapersonal Integration and the Development of Spirituality in the Therapist and the Client

A critical aspect of explicit integration in Christian therapy involves promoting personal integration and spiritual development for both therapist and client. This includes incorporating spiritual disciplines as tools for spiritual growth and deepening one's relationship with God. Various resources, such as "Disciplines of the Holy Spirit" outline

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[180] Tan, *A Christian Approach to Counseling and Psychotherapy*, 38–39.

[181] Gary R. Collins, *Christian Counseling: A Comprehensive Guide*, Third edition (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, 2007), 825.

[182] Tan, *A Christian Approach to Counseling and Psychotherapy*, 39.

[183] Robert J. Lovinger, *Working with Religious Issues in Therapy* (New York: J. Aronson, 1984), 148–52.

traditional spiritual practices like solitude, surrender, and service,[184] while Adele Calhoun in his book "*Spiritual Disciplines Handbook: Practices That Transform Us,*" expands the list to seventy-five disciplines.[185]

Caution must be exercised as spiritual disciplines, if approached legalistically, can lead to detrimental outcomes like pride and self-righteousness. Gary Thomas in his co-authored article *"Authentic Faith: The Power of a Fire-Tested Life,"* introduces the concept of authentic disciplines, which are circumstances initiated or allowed by God, such as suffering and waiting, to foster spiritual growth.[186] These experiences, akin to posttraumatic growth, can be beneficial if approached with a biblical perspective that transcends immediate self-improvement and acknowledges an eternal perspective.

The goal of Christian therapy extends beyond symptom alleviation to cultivating spiritual maturity. Employing spiritual disciplines in a grace-filled manner, empowered by the Holy Spirit, is integral to this process. Additionally, spiritual direction, involving prayer and discernment of God's will, plays a vital role in deepening one's spiritual journey. Nonetheless, it is emphasized that transformation ultimately occurs through the work of the Holy Spirit, not solely through spiritual practices. Training therapists to integrate religious and spiritual interventions effectively often involves practical experience and supervision with religious clients rather than theoretical coursework alone. Several religious and spiritual therapies have shown efficacy, such as Christian accommodative cognitive therapy for depression and Muslim psychotherapy for anxiety.[187]

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[184] Siang-Yang Tan and Douglas H. Gregg, *Disciplines of the Holy Spirit: How to Connect to the Spirit's Power and Presence* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1997), 78–82.

[185] Adele Ahlberg Calhoun, *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook: Practices That Transform Us*, Revised and Expanded edition, 1 online resource (337 pages) vols. (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2015), https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&db=nlabk&AN=1103630.

[186] Jana Riess, "Authentic Faith: The Power of a Fire-Tested Life," *Publishers Weekly* 249, no. 2 (n.d.): 16.

[187] Tan, *A Christian Approach to Counseling and Psychotherapy*, 43–45.

Explicit integration in Christian therapy, incorporating spiritual interventions ethically and sensitively, has the potential to bring profound blessings and promote holistic well-being for clients seeking psychological and spiritual growth. Whether through implicit or explicit methods, Christian therapy aims to be Christ-centered, biblically grounded, and Spirit-led, always mindful of the client's best interests.

4.6. Conclusion

In conclusion, the exploration of the role of the people of God as ministers, coupled with the theological foundation for lay counseling ministry, presents a robust framework for equipping lay leaders for Christian counseling within the context of church growth and social transformation. Drawing from biblical principles and contemporary insights, this model emphasizes the priesthood of all believers and the inclusive nature of Christian ministry, highlighting the significance of every individual's participation in God's work. The theological underpinnings of Christian counseling underscore the importance of grounding counseling practices in biblical truth, ensuring its effectiveness in fostering spiritual growth, emotional healing, and relational restoration. Assumptions regarding human nature, the integration of Scripture and science, regeneration, justification, sanctification, teaching, and discipleship provide a comprehensive framework for understanding the complexities of human experience and the role of counseling within the Christian community.

Moreover, the delineation of goals and basic principles of Christian counseling, along with the exploration of implicit and explicit integration in clinical practice, offers practical guidance for equipping lay leaders for effective counseling ministry. Whether through implicit or explicit integration, the integration of Christian faith in counseling sessions is conducted with professionalism, ethical responsibility, and sensitivity to the individual needs and preferences of clients. As lay leaders are equipped with the

necessary knowledge, skills, and spiritual discernment, they become catalysts for church growth and social transformation within the city of Thane, Maharashtra, India. By engaging in counseling ministry grounded in biblical truth and guided by the Holy Spirit, lay leaders play a vital role in nurturing individuals towards spiritual maturity, fostering healthy relationships, and ultimately contributing to the flourishing of the church and the broader community. In essence, this model for equipping lay leaders for Christian counseling serves as a transformative tool, empowering individuals to fulfill their calling as ministers of God's grace and agents of His kingdom in the city of Thane and beyond. Through their faithful service, lay leaders exemplify the embodiment of Christ's love and compassion, embodying the vision of church growth and social transformation in their local context.

CHAPTER 5

IMPERIAL RESEARCH FINDINGS, SUMMERY AND CONCLUSION

This Chapter delve into the empirical research findings derived from a comprehensive survey conducted among 55 respondents within the city of Thane, Maharashtra, India. It serves as a culmination of our investigation into various facets of Christian lay counseling initiatives in Thane, aiming to provide a detailed analysis of demographic information, perceptions of cultural and contextual factors, utilization of lay counseling services, challenges faced by lay counseling leaders, strategies for equipping them, and the theological foundations guiding Christian lay counseling practices. Through this exploration, a deeper understanding of the landscape of Christian counseling within Thane and there will be identification of key factors that influence the effectiveness and sustainability of lay counseling programs in the region.

The chapter begins by presenting demographic information, shedding light on the gender distribution, age demographics, educational backgrounds, and roles within the church of the survey respondents. This foundational data sets the stage for a comprehensive examination of respondents' perceptions regarding cultural and contextual factors influencing lay counseling, including the impact of Thane's cultural diversity, economic status, education level, and the availability of mental health resources. Additionally, an analysis will be given by respondents' attitudes towards the utilization of lay counseling services, identifying factors such as awareness, accessibility, and effectiveness that shape individuals' engagement with counseling initiatives. Subsequently, challenges faced by lay counseling leaders, ranging from limited

resources, and funding to cultural barriers and stigma surrounding mental health, and discuss strategies for equipping them to overcome these obstacles. Finally, we explore the theological foundations underpinning Christian lay counseling practices and their alignment with the cultural and social context of Thane, offering insights into the holistic approach adopted by lay counseling leaders to address spiritual and emotional needs within the community.

5.1 Demographic Information: Please provide the following demographic details:

5.1.1 Gender
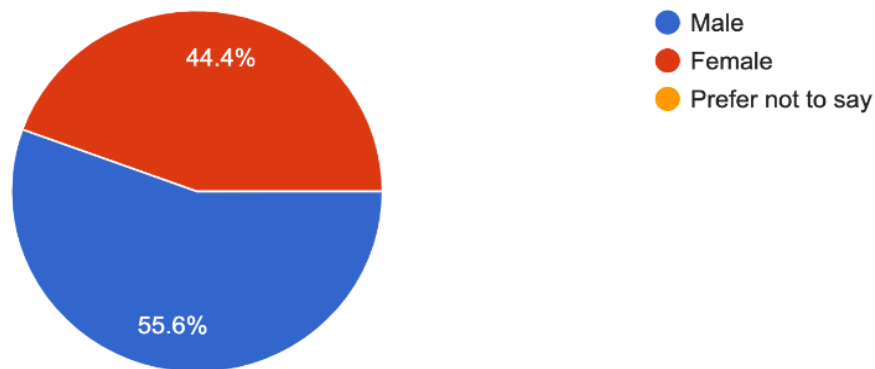
FIGURE 1. GENDER

Out of the 55 responses received, 54 participants provided their gender information. Among them, 33 identified as male, 24 identified as female, and one participant chose not to disclose their gender.

5.1.2 Age
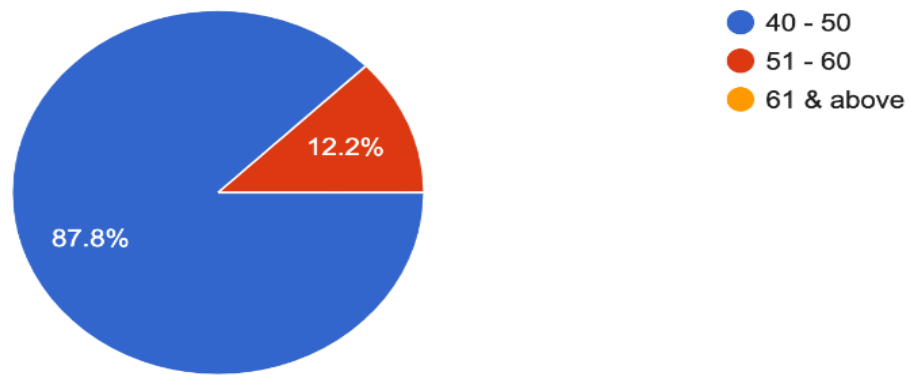
FIGURE 2. AGE

Out of the 55 responses received, 49 participants provided their age information. Among these respondents, 43 fell within the age range of 40-50, while 6 were aged between 51-60. Additionally, six participants opted not to disclose their age.

5.1.3 Educational Background
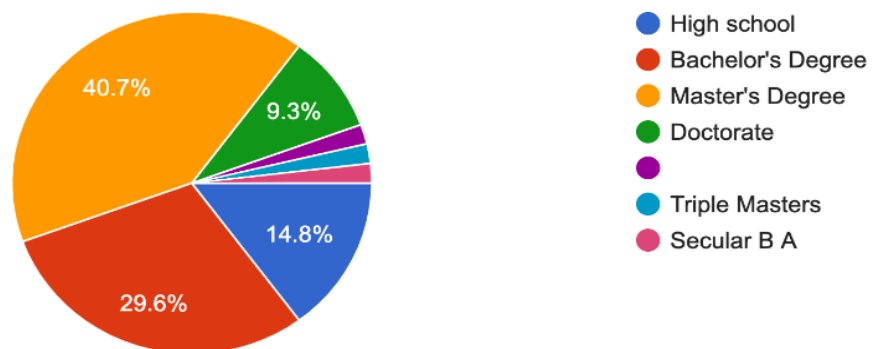
FIGURE 3. EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

Out of the 55 responses received, 54 participants provided information about their educational background. Among these respondents, 22 reported having obtained a

master's degree, 17 held bachelor's degrees, 8 had completed high school, 5 had earned doctorate degrees, 1 had education below the 10th grade, and 1 participant had attained triple master's degrees.

5.1.4 What is your role in the church?

Legend:
- Pastor
- Lay Leader
- Member
- (green)
- Online viewer
- Deacon, Women's Minister and outreach minister
- Profit
- I am Muslim
- Youth pastor

FIGURE 4. WHAT IS YOUR ROLE IN THE CHURCH?

Out of the 55 responses received, 54 participants provided information about their role within their respective churches. Among these respondents, 25 identified themselves as regular members, 13 as pastors, 7 as lay leaders, 1 as Muslim, 1 as a prophet, 1 as a youth pastor, 1 as a deacon, and 1 as being involved in women's ministry or outreach ministry. Additionally, 3 participants chose not to disclose their role within the church.

5.2 Perceptions of Cultural and Contextual Factors: Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:

5.2.1 The cultural diversity of Thane significantly influences the effectiveness of Christian lay counseling.
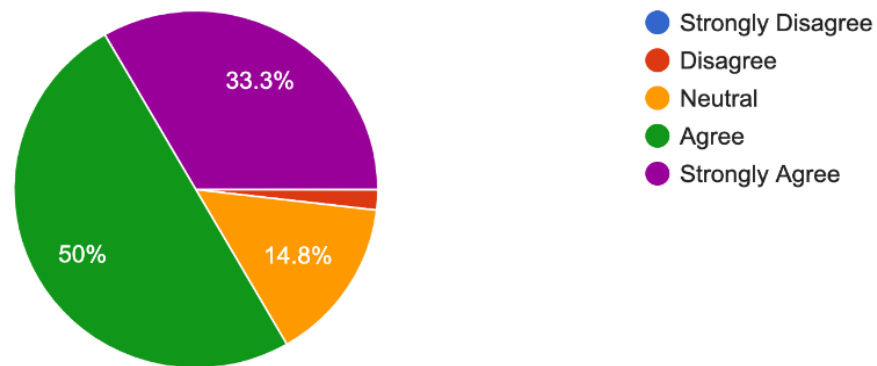
FIGURE 5. CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Out of the 55 responses received, 54 participants acknowledged the significant impact of Thane's cultural diversity on the effectiveness of Christian lay counseling. Among these respondents, 27 agreed, with 18 expressing strong agreement. Additionally, 8 responses were neutral, 1 disagreed, and 1 participant chose not to provide a response.

5.2.2 Contextual factors such as economic status and education level play a crucial role in shaping the success of Christian counseling initiatives in Thane.
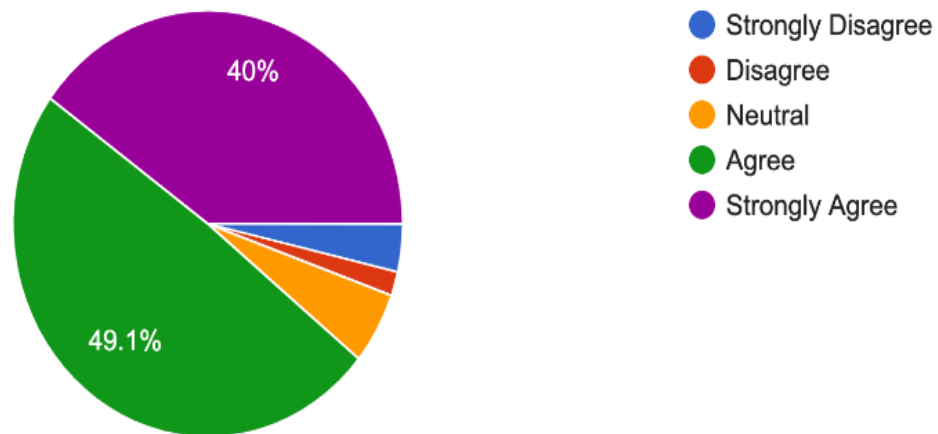
FIGURE 6. CONTEXTUAL FACTORS

Among the 55 respondents, 27 agreed that contextual factors, such as economic status and education level, significantly influence the success of Christian counseling initiatives in Thane. Of these, 22 expressed strong agreement. Additionally, 3 respondents remained neutral, while 2 strongly disagreed, and 1 disagreed with this assertion.

5.2.3 The availability of mental health resources in Thane impacts the accessibility and utilization of lay counseling services within Christian communities.
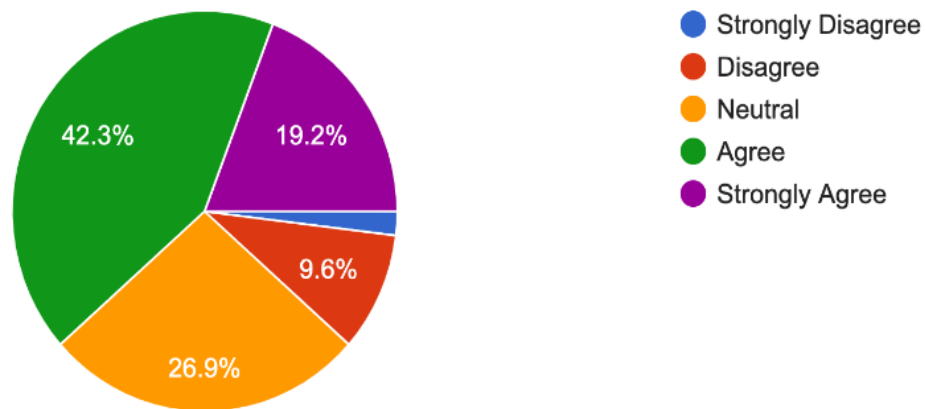
**FIGURE 7. THE AVAILABILITY OF MENTAL HEALTH
RESOURCES IN THANE**

Out of the 55 responses received, 52 participants acknowledged that the availability of mental health resources in Thane affects the accessibility and utilization of lay counseling services within Christian communities. Among these 52 respondents, 22 agreed with this statement, with an additional 10 expressing strong agreement. Meanwhile, 14 responses remained neutral, while 5 disagreed, 1 strongly disagreed, and 1 participant chose not to provide a response.

5.2.4 The level of community engagement and support affects the effectiveness of lay counseling programs in addressing diverse needs within Thane.
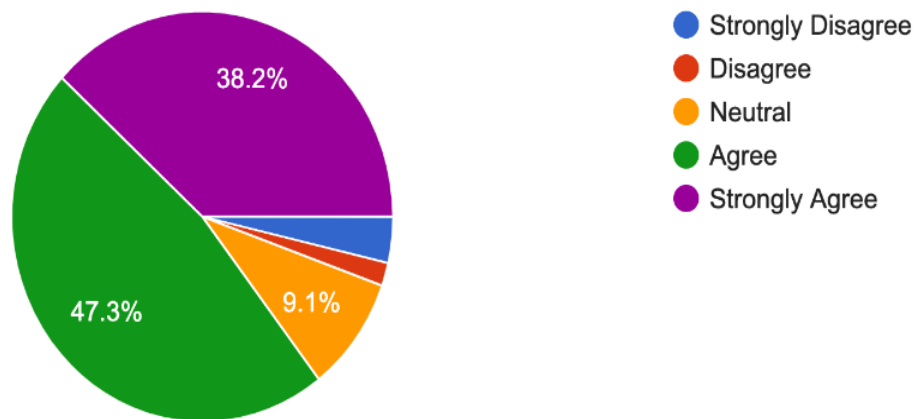
FIGURE 8. THE LEVEL OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND SUPPORT

Out of the 55 responses received, 22 respondents agreed that the level of community engagement and support significantly influences the effectiveness of lay counseling programs in addressing diverse needs within Thane. Among them, 21 strongly agreed with this statement. Additionally, 5 responses remained neutral, while 2 strongly disagreed, and 1 disagreed with the assertion.

5.3 Utilization of Lay Counseling Services: Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:

5.3.1 The Christian community in Thane actively seeks and values lay counseling services as a means of support and guidance:
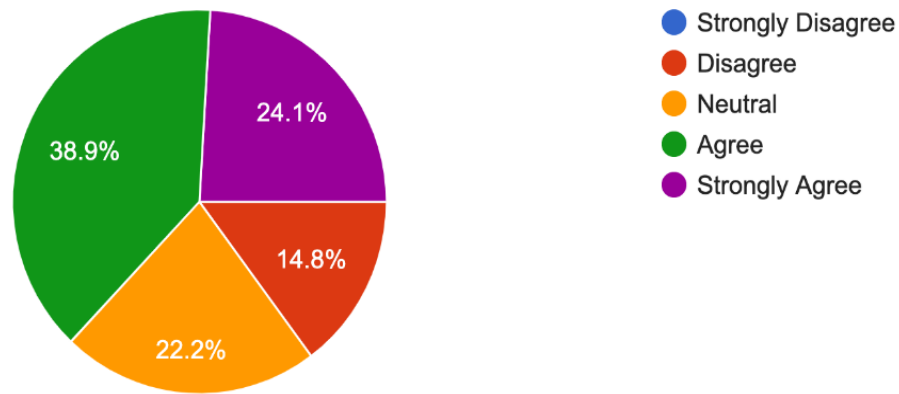
**FIGURE 9. CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY IN THANE ACTIVELY
SEEKS AND VALUES LAY COUNSELING SERVICES**

Out of the 55 responses received, 54 participants indicated that the Christian community in Thane actively seeks and values lay counseling services as a means of support and guidance. Among these 54 respondents, 21 agreed with this sentiment, with an additional 13 strongly agreeing. However, 12 responses remained neutral, while 8 disagreed, and 1 participant chose not to provide a response.

5.3.2 Awareness of available counseling resources positively influences individuals' willingness to seek and utilize lay counseling services within Christian communities in Thane.
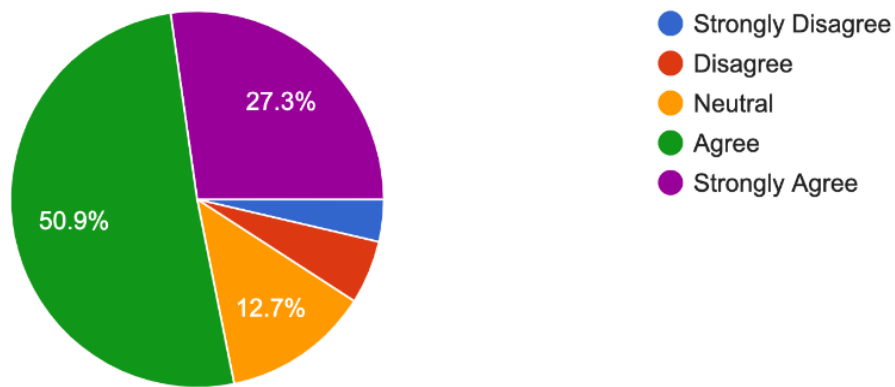
FIGURE 10. AWARENESS OF AVAILABLE COUNSELING RESOURCES

Out of the 55 responses received, 28 respondents agreed that being aware of available counseling resources has a positive impact on individuals' willingness to seek and utilize lay counseling services within Christian communities in Thane. Among these respondents, 15 strongly agreed with this statement. Additionally, 7 responses remained neutral, while 3 disagreed, and 2 strongly disagreed with the assertion.

5.3.3 The accessibility of lay counseling services, both geographically and financially, impacts the extent to which individuals engage with them.
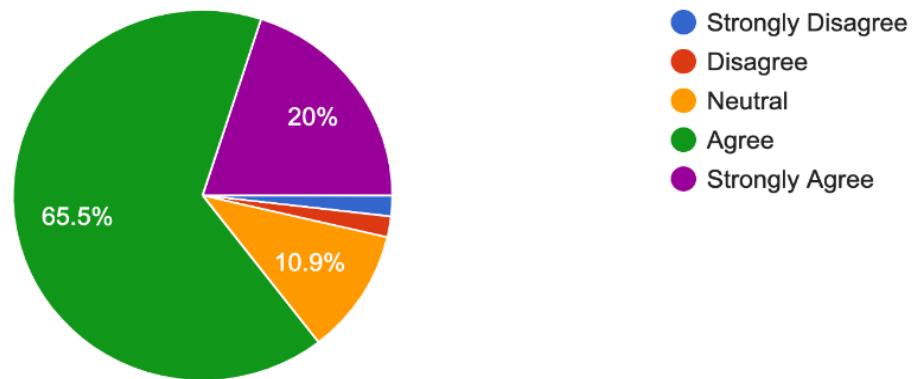
**FIGURE 11. ACCESSIBILITY OF LAY COUNSELING
SERVICES**

Among the 55 respondents, 36 agreed that the accessibility of lay counseling services, both in terms of geographical proximity and financial affordability, influences the extent to which individuals engage with them. Of these, 11 strongly agreed with the statement. Additionally, 6 respondents remained neutral, while 1 strongly disagreed, and 1 disagreed with the assertion.

5.3.4 The effectiveness of lay counseling services in addressing specific cultural and contextual needs influences their utilization within Christian communities in Thane.
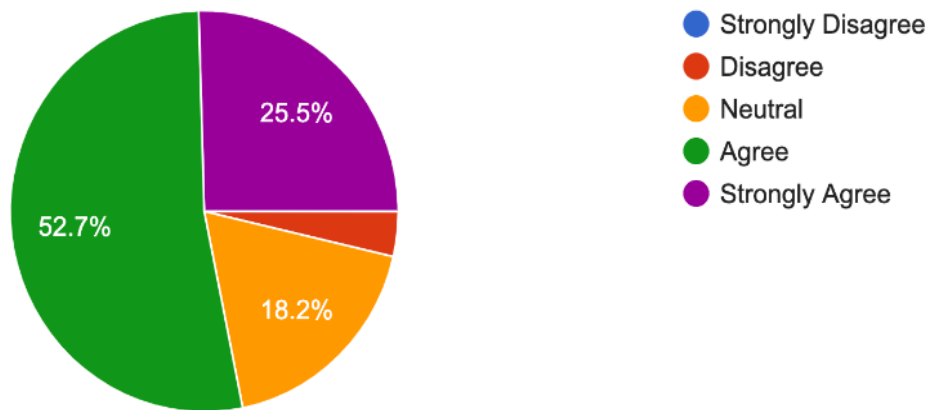
FIGURE 12. EFFECTIVENESS OF LAY COUNSELING SERVICES

Among the 55 respondents, 26 agreed that the effectiveness of lay counseling services in addressing specific cultural and contextual needs impacts their utilization within Christian communities in Thane. Among these respondents, 14 strongly agreed with this statement. Additionally, 10 responses remained neutral, while 2 disagreed with the assertion.

5.4 Challenges faced by Lay Counseling Leaders: Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:

5.4.1 Limited resources and funding present significant challenges for Christian lay counseling leaders in implementing effective programs in Thane
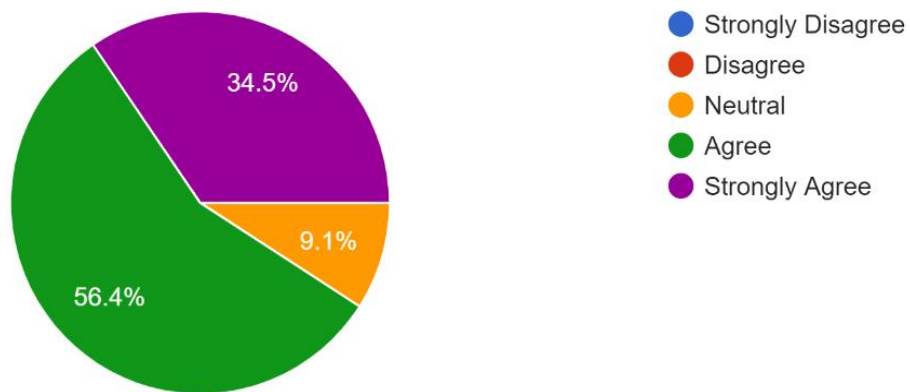
FIGURE 13. LIMITED RESOURCES AND FUNDING PRESENT SIGNIFICANT CHALLENGES

Out of the 55 respondents, 31 agreed that the limited availability of resources and funds poses significant challenges to implementing effective programs in Thane. Additionally, 19 respondents strongly agreed that these limitations are indeed significant challenges, while 5 respondents remained neutral on the matter.

5.4.2 Cultural differences and language barriers pose challenges for lay counseling leaders in effectively communicating and addressing the needs of diverse communities in Thane.
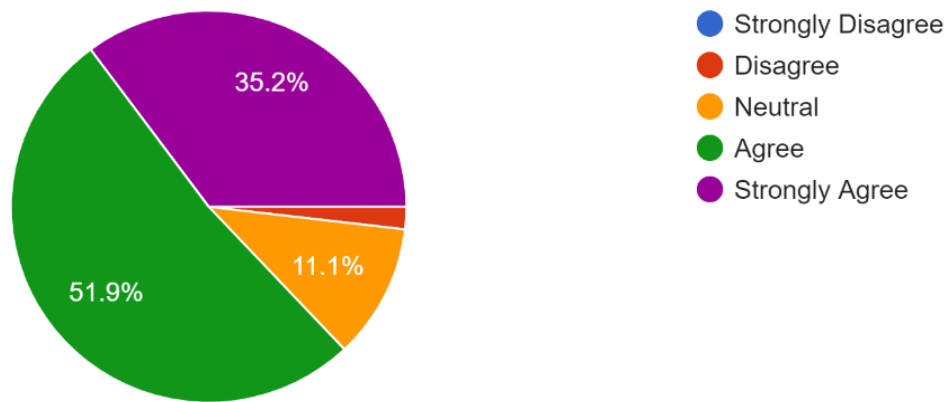
FIGURE 14. CULTURAL DIFFERENCES AND LANGUAGE BARRIERS

Among the 55 respondents, 28 agreed that Thane city serves as a hub of diversity, where individuals from all parts of India reside together. Furthermore, 19 respondents strongly agreed that language barriers and cultural differences present significant challenges for lay leaders in effectively communicating with and addressing the needs of diverse communities. Additionally, 6 responses remained neutral, while 1 respondent disagreed, and 1 preferred not to provide an answer.

5.4.3 The stigma surrounding mental health within certain cultural contexts in Thane creates obstacles for lay counseling leaders in providing support and intervention.
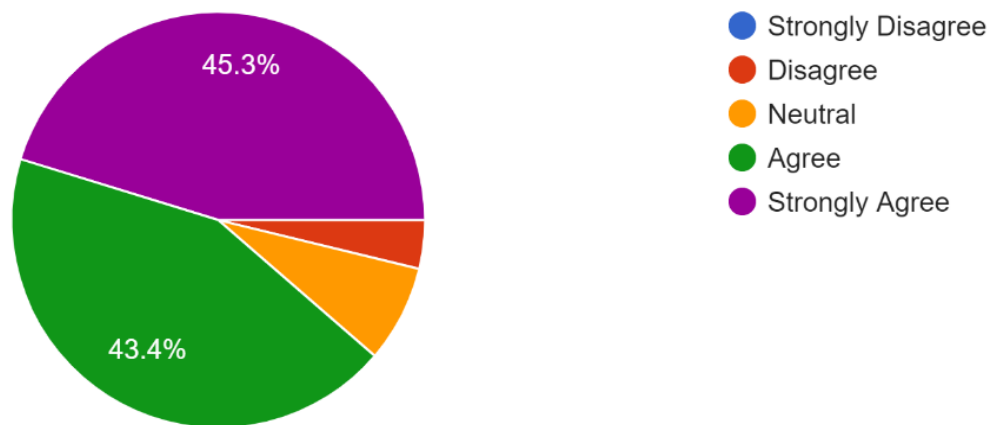
FIGURE 15. STIGMA SURROUNDING MENTAL HEALTH

Out of the 55 respondents, 24 strongly agreed that the stigma surrounding mental health within certain cultural contexts in Thane poses obstacles for lay counseling leaders in providing support and intervention. This indicates that negative beliefs surrounding mental health within specific cultural contexts hinder lay counseling efforts. Additionally, 23 respondents agreed with this assessment of stigma, while 4 remained neutral. However, 2 respondents disagreed with the notion that stigma surrounding mental health creates obstacles for lay counseling.

5.4.4 Limited access to specialized training and ongoing professional development opportunities hinders the effectiveness of lay counseling leaders in Thane.
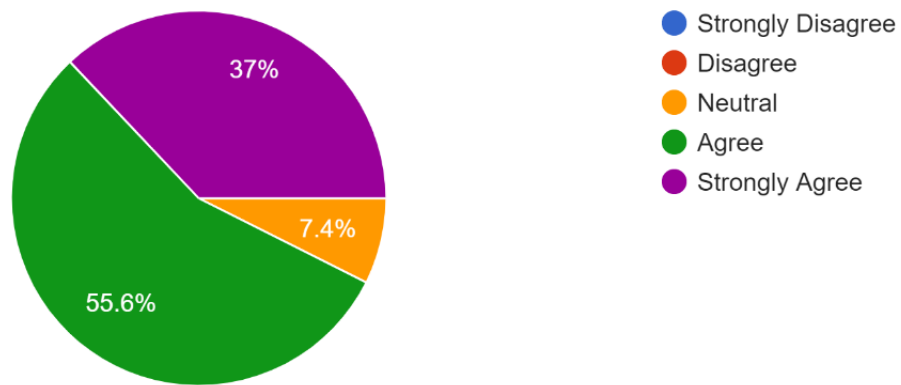
**FIGURE 16. LIMITED ACCESS TO SPECIALIZED TRAINING
AND ONGOING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
OPPORTUNITIES**

Out of the 55 respondents, 30 agreed that limited access to specialized training and opportunities for professional development hinder the effectiveness of lay counseling leaders in Thane. Among them, 20 strongly agreed, indicating that this limited access poses a significant hindrance. Additionally, 4 respondents remained neutral on this question, while 1 respondent chose not to provide an answer.

*5.5 Strategies for Equipping Lay Counseling Leaders: Please
indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:*

5.5.1 Developing comprehensive and culturally sensitive training programs is essential for equipping lay counseling leaders for effective ministry growth in Thane.
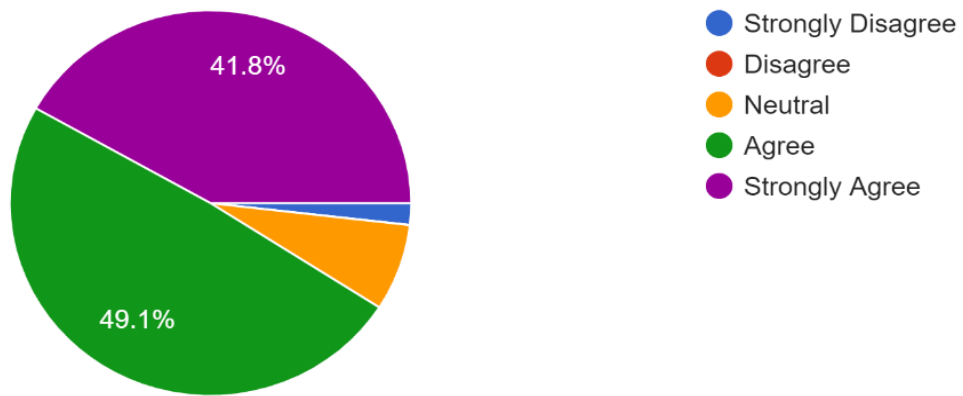
**FIGURE 17. DEVELOPING COMPREHENSIVE AND
CULTURALLY SENSITIVE TRAINING PROGRAMS**

Out of the 55 respondents, 23 strongly agreed that the development of comprehensive and culturally sensitive training programs is crucial for equipping lay leaders for effective ministry growth. Furthermore, 27 respondents agreed that such training programs are essential for lay counseling leaders. Additionally, 4 respondents remained neutral on this matter. However, 1 respondent strongly disagreed that developing comprehensive and culturally sensitive training programs is necessary for equipping lay counseling leaders for effective ministry growth in Thane.

5.5.2. Collaborating with local mental health organizations and professionals enhances the effectiveness and sustainability of lay counseling initiatives in Thane.
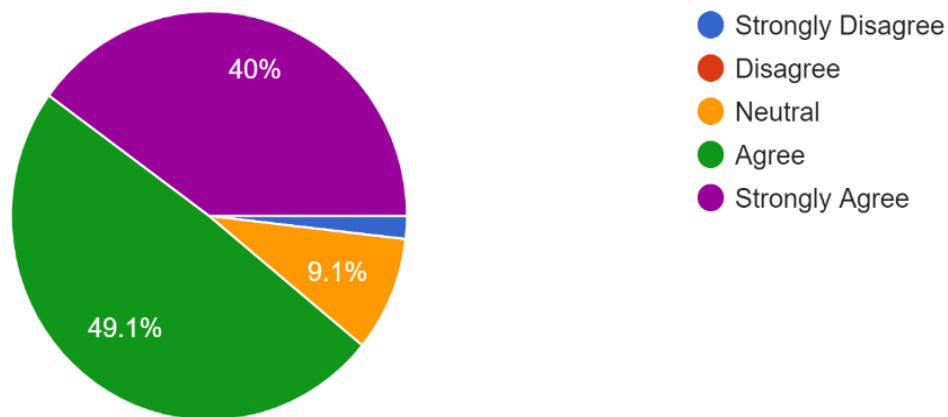
FIGURE 18. OLLABORATING WITH LOCAL MENTAL HEALTH ORGANIZATIONS AND PROFESSIONALS

Out of the 55 respondents, 22 strongly agreed that collaborating with local mental health organizations and professionals is crucial to enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of lay counseling initiatives in Thane. Additionally, 27 respondents agreed that such collaboration is needed. Furthermore, 5 respondents expressed neutrality on the matter, neither agreeing nor disagreeing with the need for collaboration. However, 1 respondent disagreed with the notion of collaborating with local mental health organizations and professionals for the transition of lay leaders concerning secular world experience.

5.5.3. Establishing mentorship programs and peer support networks provide valuable guidance and encouragement for lay counseling leaders in Thane.
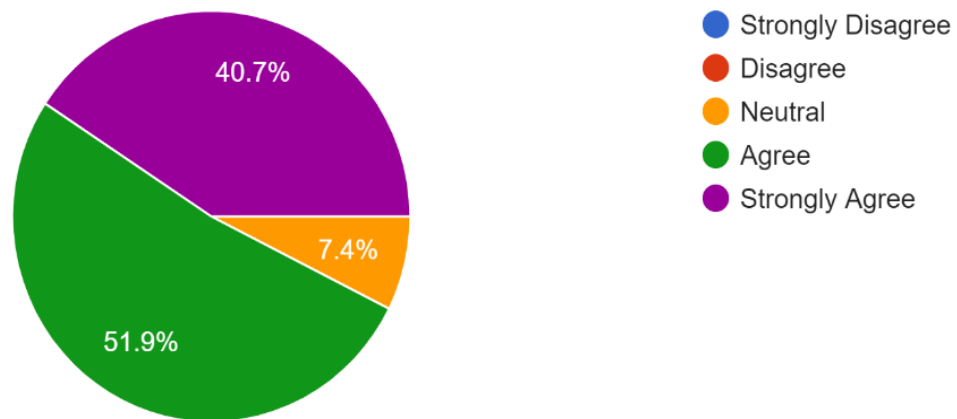
**FIGURE 19. ESTABLISHING MENTORSHIP PROGRAMS AND
PEER SUPPORT NETWORKS**

Among the 55 respondents, 22 strongly agreed that establishing mentorship programs and peer support networks offers valuable guidance and encouragement for lay counseling leaders in Thane. Additionally, 28 respondents agreed that encouraging lay counseling leaders to establish such programs would provide valuable guidance as well. Furthermore, 4 respondents neither agreed nor disagreed on this matter, while 1 respondent chose not to provide an answer.

5.5.4 Implementing community outreach and awareness campaigns helps destigmatize mental health issues and increase acceptance of lay counseling services within Thane.
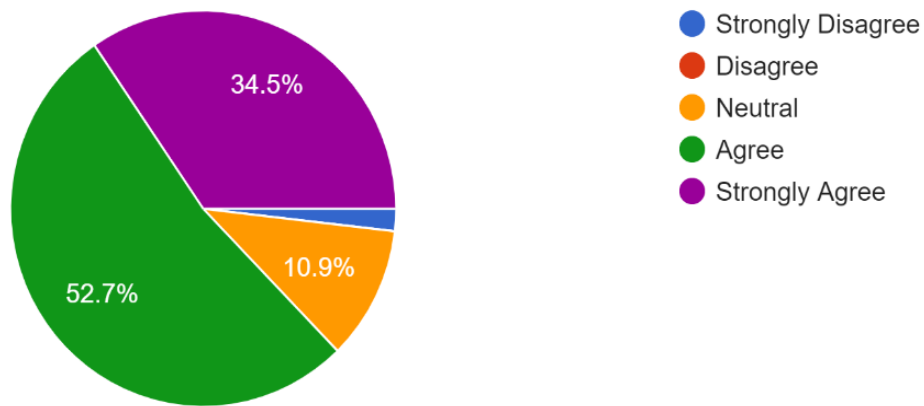
FIGURE 20. IMPLEMENTING COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS

Out of the 55 respondents, 29 agreed that implementing community outreach and awareness campaigns would be beneficial. Additionally, 19 respondents strongly agreed that such campaigns would help destigmatize mental health issues and increase acceptance of lay counseling services. On the other hand, 6 respondents neither agreed nor disagreed regarding whether awareness would increase through outreach programs. However, 1 respondent strongly disagreed with the notion that community outreach and awareness campaigns would have this effect.

5.6 Theological Foundations and Frameworks: Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:

5.6.1 The theological principles guiding Christian lay counseling practices are well-aligned with the cultural and social context of Thane.

**FIGURE 21. THEOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES GUIDING
CHRISTIAN LAY COUNSELING PRACTICES**

Out of 55 respondents, 27 agreed that the theological principles guiding Christian lay counseling practices align well with the cultural and social context of Thane. Additionally, 20 respondents strongly agreed with this alignment. On the other hand, 8 respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the notion that these theological principles are well-aligned with the cultural and social context of Thane.

5.6.2 Emphasizing compassion, empathy, and grace in lay counseling practices reflects the theological foundations of Christian faith and resonates with the community in Thane.
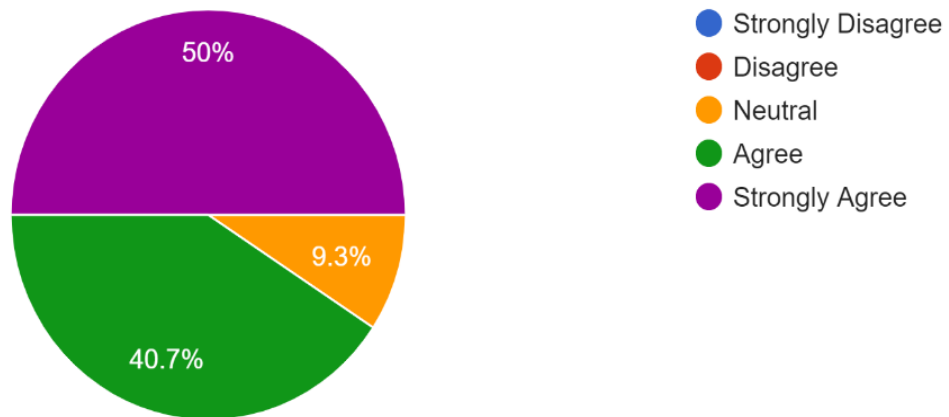
**FIGURE 22. EMPHASIZING COMPASSION, EMPATHY, AND
GRACE IN LAY COUNSELING PRACTICES**

Out of 55 respondents, 27 strongly affirmed that highlighting compassion, empathy, and grace in lay counseling practices aligns with the theological foundations of Christian faith and resonates within the Thane community. Additionally, 22 respondents agreed with this assertion. Moreover, 5 respondents neither agreed nor disagreed, while 1 respondent chose not to provide an answer to the question.

5.6.3 Integrating scriptural teachings and doctrinal beliefs into lay counseling approaches enhances their relevance and effectiveness in addressing spiritual and emotional needs in Thane.
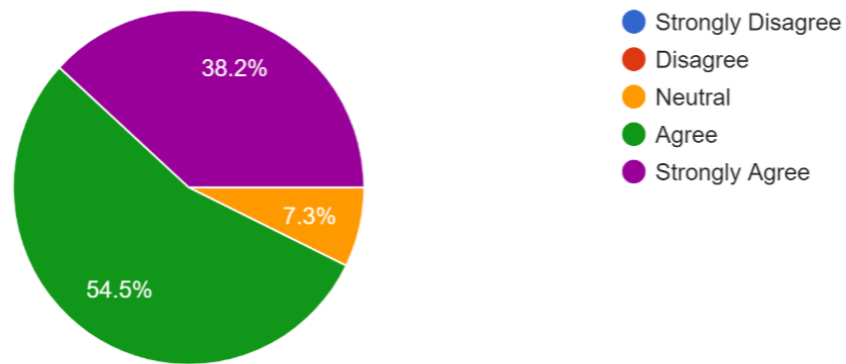
**FIGURE 23. INTEGRATING SCRIPTURAL TEACHINGS AND
DOCTRINAL BELIEFS INTO LAY COUNSELING
APPROACHES**

Out of 55 respondents, 30 agreed that incorporating scriptural teachings and doctrinal beliefs into lay counseling approaches would improve their relevance and effectiveness in addressing the spiritual and emotional needs of Thane. Additionally, 21 respondents strongly agreed with this notion. However, 4 respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the given statement.

5.6.4 Providing holistic and person-centered care based on Christian principles fosters a sense of belonging and support within the community in Thane.
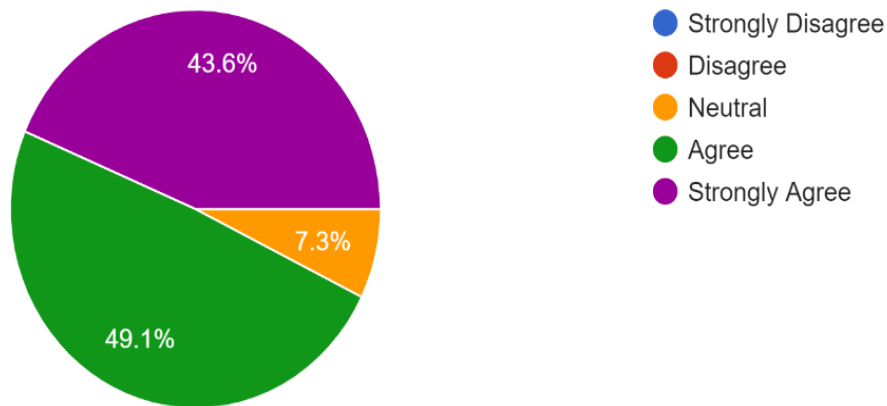
**FIGURE 24. PROVIDING HOLISTIC AND PERSON-CENTERED
CARE BASED ON CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLES**

Out of 55 respondents, 24 individuals strongly endorsed the idea that offering holistic and person-centered care grounded in Christian principles cultivates a feeling of belonging and support within the Thane community. Furthermore, a majority of 27 respondents agreed with this perspective. However, 4 respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the presented question.

5.7 Summary and Conclusion

In the dissertation titled "A Model for Equipping Lay Leaders for Christian Counseling as Part of Church Growth and Social Transformation in the City of Thane, Maharashtra, India," a survey was conducted among 55 respondents to gather insights into various aspects related to Christian lay counseling initiatives in Thane. The study aimed to understand the demographic profile of respondents, their perceptions on cultural and contextual factors influencing lay counseling, challenges faced by lay counseling leaders, and strategies for equipping them.

A. **Demographic Information:**

The majority of respondents were male (33) and fell within the age range of 40-50 (43). Most respondents held a master's degree (22) or a bachelor's degree (17), and they assumed various roles within their respective churches, including regular members, pastors, lay leaders, and participants in different ministries.

B. Perceptions of Cultural and Contextual Factors:

Respondents acknowledged the significant influence of Thane's cultural diversity on the effectiveness of Christian lay counseling. They recognized the role of contextual factors such as economic status and education level in shaping counseling initiatives. The availability of mental health resources, community engagement, and support were also considered crucial factors.

C. Utilization of Lay Counseling Services:

The survey revealed that the Christian community in Thane actively seeks and values lay counseling services. Awareness of available counseling resources positively influenced individuals' willingness to seek counseling, while accessibility of services, both geographically and financially, impacted their utilization.

D. Challenges Faced by Lay Counseling Leaders:

Respondents identified limited resources and funding, cultural differences, language barriers, and stigma surrounding mental health as significant challenges. Additionally, limited access to specialized training and professional development opportunities posed obstacles for lay counseling leaders.

E. Strategies for Equipping Lay Counseling Leaders:

Effective strategies identified by respondents included comprehensive and culturally sensitive training programs, collaboration with local mental health organizations, and the establishment of mentorship programs and peer support networks. Community outreach and awareness campaigns were also suggested to destigmatize mental health issues and increase acceptance of lay counseling services.

F. Theological Foundations and Frameworks:

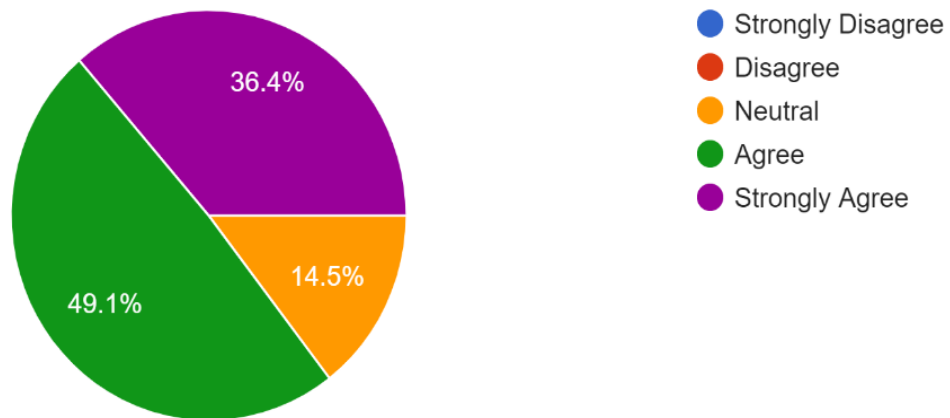Respondents perceived theological principles guiding Christian lay counseling practices as well-aligned with the cultural and social context of Thane. Emphasizing compassion, empathy, and grace in counseling practices reflected the theological foundations of Christian faith. Integrating scriptural teachings and providing holistic, person-centered care based on Christian principles were considered essential for addressing spiritual and emotional needs.

5.8. Conclusion

Chapter 5 stands as the pinnacle of this dissertation's investigative journey. While Chapter 3 meticulously crafted the research methodology and theoretical underpinnings, Chapter 5 emerges as the empirical cornerstone, offering substantive evidence to affirm hypotheses and tackle the core research inquiries. Through the integration of visual aids like graphs and charts, this chapter presents a lucid portrayal of the amassed data, facilitating an intuitive comprehension of pivotal discoveries. Additionally, the exhaustive examination of results within Chapter 5 delves deep into the intricate nuances of the research outcomes, unveiling latent patterns, emerging trends, and correlations inherent within the dataset. By presenting this empirical bedrock, Chapter 5 not only fortifies the dissertation's theoretical scaffold but also bequeaths invaluable insights to the realms of lay leadership, Christian counseling, and ecclesiastical expansion, particularly within the dynamic context of Thane, Maharashtra, and its surrounding environs. Thus, this chapter assumes a pivotal role in seamlessly amalgamating theoretical paradigms with pragmatic applications, enriching scholarly dialogues, and furnishing future research endeavors and pragmatic interventions within the domain of ecclesiastical stewardship and communal transformation.

In conclusion, the findings gleaned from the survey bear testament to the paramount significance of comprehending the intricate interplay between cultural, contextual, and theological elements underpinning Christian lay counseling initiatives in Thane. The effective strategies illuminated by respondents offer a roadmap for devising a robust model tailored to equip lay leaders for Christian counseling, thereby catalyzing ecclesiastical growth and societal metamorphosis within the cityscape. It becomes evident that collaborative endeavors involving local communities, mental health institutions, and ecclesiastical luminaries are imperative for surmounting challenges and ensuring the sustained efficacy of lay counseling initiatives in Thane. Overall, the survey findings furnish invaluable guidance for stakeholders vested in Christian counseling endeavors within the region, laying a solid foundation for subsequent research inquiries and the practical implementation of the envisaged model.

CHAPTER 6

**PROPOSED MODAL FOR EQUIPPING LAY LEADERS
FOR CHRISTIAN COUNSELING IN THANE CITY AND
IMPLEMENTATION, IMPLICATION AND CONCLUSION
FOR THE DISSERTATION**

6.1. Introduction

This chapter delves into the development and implementation of a comprehensive lay counseling program tailored to the unique cultural context of Thane City. Addressing the urgent need for trained Christian counselors in regions facing escalating personal and relational challenges, the chapter outlines a structured training approach designed to equip pastors, lay leaders, and p ersonnel from Christian NGOs with the essential skills and knowledge required for effective counseling within both church and community settings. Drawing upon insights from renowned scholars and practitioners in the field, the proposed model emphasizes the integration of theology and psychology, cultural sensitivity, and the adoption of evidence-based counseling techniques, such as Christian cognitive therapy. Through a combination of theoretical foundations, practical skills development, and ongoing supervision, the chapter aims to empower lay leaders to provide compassionate and competent support to individuals in need, thereby fostering holistic church growth and contributing to social transformation within the city of Thane, Maharashtra, India.

6.2. Background for Proposing Modal

The concept of lay counselor training has emerged relatively recently within the church, gaining prominence over the past 25 years primarily in countries like the United States and a few others worldwide, as detailed in Chapter 1 and 2. This rise in attention comes at a time marked by escalating challenges such as strained relationships, family discord, addiction issues, and mental health concerns, both in developed and developing nations. The pressing need for lay counselors within local churches and the broader Christian community is underscored by limited resources and a severe shortage of mental health services, particularly in regions like Thane, Maharashtra, India. Acknowledging the universality of human suffering, regardless of cultural differences, highlights the urgent demand for Christians trained as lay counselors, especially in areas often referred to as the Third World. While ideal scenarios involve trainers emerging from the same cultural context as their trainees, the scarcity of mental health professionals in developing countries may necessitate support from external trainers. However, collaboration with local ministry partners and cultural sensitivity are essential in designing and delivering effective lay counselor training programs.[1]

According to Patel, two major barriers hindering successful treatments in developing countries are the lack of skilled human resources and the acceptability of treatments across cultures.[2] Counseling in resource-limited non-Western countries is often perceived as necessary only for the mentally ill, rather than for the broader society. Additionally, substantial cultural taboos surrounding seeking counseling or therapy exist due to social stigma and the protection of marriage and family secrets. Hence, there is a critical need for normalizing counseling for all societal members and shifting the

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[1] David Carson, "Lay Counselor Training in Developing Countries: Needs, Approaches, and Impact on Quality of Life," *International Journal of Humanities and Social Studies* 5 (February 1, 2017): 82–83.

[2] Vikram Patel et al., "Improving Access to Psychological Treatments: Lessons from Developing Countries," *Behaviour Research and Therapy* 49, no. 9 (September 2011): 523–28, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.brat.2011.06.012.

paradigm to view counseling as a legitimate area of health practice, particularly in the developing world. Achieving these changes requires culturally sensitive public education and competent counseling practices. When planning and conducting lay counselor training programs, it is imperative for trainers from outside the culture to work in collaboration with organization partners within the country or area, respecting their guidance and leadership. Moreover, trainers from external regions must strive to understand the culture in which they are training lay counselors, checking their assumptions and biases continuously. Outsiders should also rely on co-trainers within the culture and locale, who often serve as translators, to contextualize the training material effectively. Personal experience and observations demonstrate that well-trained lay counselors, irrespective of geography and educational background, can filter program information through their cultural lenses and adapt it to their specific groups, enhancing its personal usefulness and relevance.[3] Despite potential challenges in translation and cultural adaptation, grassroots trainees often demonstrate resilience in filtering and applying program information to meet the needs of their communities, particularly when trainers emphasize practical application and experiential learning throughout the training process.

6.3. Examples of Lay Counselor Programs Developed in the United States

In exploring the landscape of lay counselor training, significant attention has been given to programs developed in the United States, particularly by notable figures such as Siang-Yang Tan and other renowned scholars mentioned in chapter 2 and chapter 4. While Tan's and others work primarily addresses the needs of lay counselors within Western contexts, it offers valuable insights applicable to diverse international settings,

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[3] Carson, "Lay Counselor Training in Developing Countries: Needs, Approaches, and Impact on Quality of Life," 82–83.

including the city of Thane, Maharashtra, India. Several churches across the United States have implemented their own lay counselor training initiatives, with notable examples being the Caring for People's God's Way (CFPGW) programs facilitated by the American Association of Christian Counselors (AACC). These programs, comprising extensive DVD series, aim to equip lay counselors with essential skills and knowledge, albeit with some limitations regarding cultural relevance and accessibility.

However, the implementation of such programs in developing countries like India poses practical challenges, including the extensive duration of training, reliance on online resources, and cultural specificity of the content. Additionally, the high cost associated with acquiring materials may hinder widespread adoption in resource-constrained environments. Nevertheless, these programs serve as valuable reference points for developing tailored training materials suited to the unique cultural context of Thane, Maharashtra, India, and similar regions worldwide. Outside the realm of Christian counseling, secular organizations like the National Board for Certified Counselors International (NBCC-I) have pioneered initiatives such as the Mental Health Facilitator (MHF) program. Designed to improve access to mental health care in various communities globally, the MHF program targets lay individuals and non-counseling professionals, offering a 30-hour core curriculum covering essential mental health concepts and skills. While this program demonstrates promise in addressing mental health needs at the grassroots level, its effectiveness in diverse cultural contexts remains subject to further evaluation.[4]

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[4] David K. Carson et al., *International Lay Counselor Training: A Short Term Training-the-Trainers Program for Christian Leaders and Workers in Developing Countries* (Denver, Colorado: Outskirts Press, 2011), 2–6.

6.4. The Need and Rationale for Lay Counselor Training in
Developing Countries: The Example of India

Carson, Jain, and Ramirez authors of article called "*Counseling and Family Therapy in India: Evolving Professions in a Rapidly Developing Nation*," underscore that individuals and families in India encounter a myriad of personal and relational challenges attributable to the effects of globalization and modernization. [5] These challenges encompass various areas such as family conflicts arising from inter-caste marriages and dowry disputes, sexual issues within marriages, disagreements over child-rearing practices, and academic pressures on youth. Moreover, mental health issues, including depression, anxiety, and substance abuse, are prevalent but often overlooked in the country. The inadequacy of mental health services and the unfamiliarity with counseling concepts exacerbate the situation, particularly in rural areas where access to such services is scarce. Given these circumstances, lay counseling emerges as a promising approach to address mental health needs effectively within both church and community settings. For more detailed information please look at chapter 2 from this dissertation.

Furthermore, Christian non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have a pivotal role to play in addressing mental health challenges in India. These organizations, in collaboration with local churches and institutions, can pioneer innovative programs for mental health treatment and raise public awareness about various mental health issues.[6] The strength of NGOs lies in their ability to work in partnerships and networks, leveraging community resources and volunteerism to deliver much-needed mental health services. By adopting a training-the-trainers approach, NGOs can equip individuals within local communities with essential counseling skills and knowledge, thereby

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[5] David Carson, Sachin Jain, and Sylvia Ramirez, "Counseling and Family Therapy in India: Evolving Professions in a Rapidly Developing Nation," *International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling* 31 (March 1, 2009): 45–56, https://doi.org/10.1007/s10447-008-9067-8.

[6] Carson, Jain, and Ramirez.

extending the reach of mental health assistance to those in need. [7] Additionally, collaboration between NGOs and academic institutions can foster mutual learning and skill enhancement, ultimately contributing to the development of mental health care infrastructure in India and beyond.

6.4.1 The Legal consideration for Implementing Lay Counseling Program in India

In the context of developing a model for equipping lay leaders for Christian counseling as part of church growth and social transformation in Thane, Maharashtra, it is crucial to navigate the legal and regulatory landscape of India. Given the stringent requirements and recognized professional standards set by key legislation such as the MHCA 2017, RPwD Act 2016, RCI Act 1992, and NCAHP Act 2021, any initiative must ensure compliance to provide credible and effective mental health support. These laws delineate specific qualifications for mental health professionals, emphasizing the need for recognized training programs. Aligning a lay counseling model within these frameworks will enhance its legitimacy, ensuring that lay counselors are adequately trained and that their services meet regulatory standards.

To implement such a model effectively, partnering with institutions of national importance like PGIMER Chandigarh, AIIMS New Delhi, JIPMER Pondicherry, and NIMHANS Bangalore can be instrumental. These institutions have the autonomy to develop and recognize specialized training programs. By leveraging their expertise, the proposed lay counseling initiative in Thane can be tailored to meet the local cultural and contextual needs while maintaining high standards of care. Periodic reviews and outcome assessments can ensure the program's effectiveness and sustainability, ultimately

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[7] SANJEEV JAIN, "Meeting Mental Health Needs of Developing Countries: NGO Innovations in India. Edited by V. Patel and R. Thara. (Pp. 402; $59.95, ISBN 0-7619-9699-0 Hb.) Sage: London, UK. 2003.," *Psychological Medicine* 34, no. 3 (2004): 565–66, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0033291703232359.

contributing to church growth and social transformation by addressing the mental health needs of the community within a robust, legally compliant framework.[8] This approach will empower lay leaders with the skills and recognition necessary to provide impactful Christian counseling in Thane.

6.5. Overview of the Lay Counselor Training Program

The Lay Counselor Training Program (LCTP) aims to equip pastors, volunteer lay counselors, and personnel from Christian NGOs with the skills and knowledge necessary to provide compassionate and effective support to individuals in local churches and communities. These three-day training sessions, conducted multiple times a year across key locations in Asia and other regions, serve the purpose of training church leaders and screened volunteers closely associated with local churches to establish Christian counseling centers. These centers, ideally situated within or near churches and supported by participating NGOs, would offer ongoing counseling services to address the personal and relational needs of individuals both within and outside the church community. To sustain these efforts, ongoing fundraising initiatives involving individuals and non-profit organizations associated with the LCTP are envisioned to provide financial support for training and the establishment of counseling centers.

To ensure the delivery of quality care and counseling, second-tier lay counselors would operate under the supervision of local church leaders and, where available, volunteer professionals trained in counseling and committed to Christian principles. Supervisors would maintain close ties with trained lay counselors, offering ongoing consultation and referral support as needed. Recognizing the limited availability of mental health services in rural areas of developing countries, efforts would be made to

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[8] Sharad Philip et al., "The Legality and Ethical Issues of Certifying Laypersons as Mental Health Counselors in India," *Indian Journal of Psychological Medicine* 44, no. 6 (November 2022): 537–43, https://doi.org/10.1177/02537176221074253.

extend these training programs to believers in such regions. The LCTP, training covers various modules tailored for pastors, church leaders, and lay ministry personnel associated with Christian organizations. This flexible program can be adapted to accommodate different schedules and preferences, with specific modules also offered to professional counselors, therapists, and trainees in academic settings.[9] With positive outcome from studies in South and Southeast Asia, where portions of the program have already been implemented, trainers are encouraged to remain vigilant for opportunities to expand this initiative globally, viewing counseling not only as a form of support but also as an evangelistic tool.

6.6 General Information about the Modal

a. What is it?

The Lay Counseling Ministry exists for the purpose of providing both our congregation and the community at large with trained Christian helpers. It is designed to meet the problem situations of those persons in need of para-professional level counseling. We seek to serve people with special needs in times of concern, conflict, or crisis.

b. How is it related to church?

The Lay Counseling Ministry should be responsible to the committee of the church.

c. Who are these Lay counselors?

The Lay Counselors are members of any congregation drawn from a wide variety of backgrounds and occupations who have gifts, skills and experience in supportive helping. Licensed mental health professionals should train and supervise the counselors.

d. What kinds of counseling we should meet?

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[9] Carson et al., *International Lay Counselor Training*.

Personal, relational, marital, divorce, family, grief, vocational, alcohol, other.

e. What kinds of counseling needs do we not meet?

Professional level psychopathologies (psychoses, schizophrenia, etc.,) or needs requiring medical intervention or in-depth psychological testing should be referred as soon as recognized to appropriate agencies or professionals.

f. What does it cost?

There is no mandatory fee. Our counseling should be made possible by the people of the Local Churchs and the contributions of the counselees who share in the cost of this ministry by voluntary donations.

g. When and where is the counseling done?

Generally at regularly scheduled appointment times determined by the counselors' availability. Meetings are held at the church's counseling rooms or on ZOOM. According to the problem situation, individual, conjoint or group counseling may be recommended.

h. Is the counseling confidential?

Lay leaders are equipped to ensure confidentiality, uphold professional boundaries, showcase competency, and manage ethical dilemmas arising from conflicting values. For further details, please refer to Chapter 2, subsection 2.12.4, on Ethical Liability and Pitfalls.

i.Are the Lay Counselors Supervised?

The Lay Counselors will be under the guidance of a Supervising Consultant, who must hold a license in mental health practice. Alongside regular group training and supervision, they will also benefit from individual guidance provided by other qualified clinical professionals. For further details, please refer to Chapter 2, subsection 2.12.3, on Supervision of Lay Counselor .

j. How may a counseling appointment be arranged?

A person who desires counseling should call the counseling Church office every church must have a separate phone number for booking appointment. Intake Administrator should contact him/her and answer any questions about the program and attempt to assess the person's need to provide the best available counselor to work with the situation. The assigned Lay Counselor will then contact the person and arrange a time to begin the counseling process. Again, would it be determined that the person's need is beyond the level of expertise of the Lay Counseling Ministry, a referral should be made to an appropriate professional or agency.

k. Job Discription For The Lay Counseling Coordinator

He/ She must serve as a part-time staff member (10-20 hours/week), reporting to the Senior Pastor and being accountable to the Church Committee. Responsible for the development and management of the Lay Counseling Ministry, they should operate within the program and policies of the Church and the goals Committee. Duties include overseeing counseling, managing administrative functions, maintaining records, handling referrals, ensuring confidentiality, arranging professional supervision, coordinating counselor training, facilitating communication between staff, committee, and congregation, managing public relations, addressing ethical concerns, and providing quarterly reports to the Church Committee and Senior Pastor. Additionally, they will collaborate with the church's Treasurer regarding financial matters related to the Lay Counseling Ministry.

l. Job Description For The Lay Counseling Ministry Supervising Consultant

The Lay Counseling Ministry Supervising Consultant is tasked with providing professional supervision to the Lay Counseling Ministry, reporting to the Lay Counseling Director and Church Committee of the Church. This position requires at least one-year commitment and is filled by a licensed mental health professional in India, chosen by the Lay Counseling Director and Church Committee. Responsibilities include integrating

Christian faith with psychology, providing training to lay counselors, offering expertise in curriculum development and practice, advising on ethical and legal matters, offering additional consultation to counselors, facilitating referrals, supporting individual supervisors, assisting in counselor selection, providing leadership and organizational development assistance, offering critique and support to the Director, being available for consultation to various church committees, maintaining lifestyle consistent with church leadership standards, and ensuring the credibility and competence of the Lay Counseling Ministry and its counselors. The estimated annual time commitment for this role is between 150-175 hours.[10]

6.7 Lay Counseling Ministry Theological Affirmations Concerning Counseling and Human Sexuality

Within Christian theology, there exists an ongoing pursuit to interpret existence through a theological framework, particularly concerning human sexuality, which possesses the dual potential of expressing love and devotion to both the divine and fellow beings, yet also harbors the risk of exploitation. It is affirmed that every individual, regardless of gender, reflects the divine image, affirming equality before God despite societal constructs that may suggest otherwise. The human body is revered as a sacred vessel, housing the Holy Spirit and embodying divine essence, thereby emphasizing the profound significance of the physical, emotional, and spiritual dimensions of human sexuality within the context of committed love and accountability to God and others.

Moreover, human sexuality transcends personal boundaries and holds societal ramifications, capable of being exploited for oppressive ends, in direct contradiction to the intended order established by God. These theological affirmations underscore the imperative of pursuing wholeness through Christ and participating in the redemptive

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[10] "LCPC Lay Counseling Training Program Guideline" (La canada Presbyterian Church, 2004).

community of faith, highlighting the solemn duty bestowed upon ordained ministers and pastoral counselors to uphold integrity and provide compassionate care for those under their charge.[11] Instances of sexual misconduct are unequivocally condemned as grievous transgressions against God, victims, and the broader community, necessitating empathetic support for victims, restitution for damages, the removal of perpetrators from pastoral roles, and the implementation of robust policies to prevent abuse and ensure justice and reconciliation for all parties, all anchored in God's forgiving love within the context of justice.

6.8 Lay Counseling Ministry Initial Intensive Training Course

General Information

a. **Classwork**

Trainees' attendance is mandatory for each session of this training program, as these classes serve as the cornerstone of your forthcoming endeavors. It is imperative that assignments pertaining to each class are fulfilled prior to the scheduled date, as discussion questions based on the readings will be presented at the outset of each session. Additionally, periodic assessments may be conducted to gauge your comprehension of the material covered in the readings, typically within the initial hour of the class. Most in-class activities will focus on practical exercises relevant to counseling, occupying the latter portion of the session. These hands-on exercises aim to reinforce the practical aspects of counseling and will be the primary focus during the second hour of each class.

b. **Trainee Personal Counseling:**

Throughout the initial week of the training program, trainees will be paired with a Lay Counselor, with whom they will engage in personal counseling sessions lasting 50

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[11] "Sexual Contact by Pastors and Pastoral Counselors in Professional Relationships | Office of Justice Programs," accessed May 7, 2024, https://www.ojp.gov/ncjrs/virtual-library/abstracts/sexual-contact-pastors-and-pastoral-counselors-professional.

minutes each week for the subsequent 8 weeks. These sessions provide trainees with a platform to delve into their own unresolved issues while also experiencing the role of a counselee firsthand. The Lay Counselor will initiate contact during the first week to arrange a mutually convenient meeting time.

c. **Outside Trainee Counseling:**

By the ninth week of the program, participants will be required to select an "Experimental Counselee" from their acquaintances, excluding close relatives. This individual should not be in a state of crisis, and they should be willing to undergo counseling sessions as the trainee practices the skills acquired during the training. Over a span of 10 weeks, trainees will conduct approximately 45-minute counseling sessions with the chosen individual. The sessions will be recorded using a reliable cassette recorder for review purposes. Additionally, a Lay Counselor will be assigned to each trainee, serving as their Counselor-Trainer. This Counselor-Trainer will dedicate 45 minutes per week to reviewing and offering constructive feedback on the recorded counseling sessions.

d. **Assignments:**

The readings are taken from books and reports which will be related to one another. The purpose of the books is to give you a solid overview of the counseling process. One book contains practical exercises for your training. We will do most all of them. The work is hard and demanding. Put yourself into it and you can't help but grow![12]

e. **Books and Readings:**

Gerard Egan, *The Skilled Helper: A Problem-Management and Opportunity-Development Approach to Helping*, 10th ed (Belmont, Calif: Brooks/Cole, Cengage Learning, 2014)

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[12] "LCPC Lay Counseling Training Program Guideline."

Kenneth C. Haugk and William J. McKay, *Christian Caregiving, a Way of Life. Leader's Guide*, New ed (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 1994).

Siang-Yang Tan, *A Christian Approach to Counseling and Psychotherapy: Christ-Centered, Biblically-Based, and Spirit-Filled*, 1 online resource (xv, 82 pages) vols. (Eugene ; Oregon: Cascade Books, 2022)

Siang-Yang Tan, *Counseling and Psychotherapy: A Christian Perspective*, Second edition (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, a division of Baker Publishing Group, 2022)

Siang-Yang Tan, Eric T. Scalise, and Tim Clinton, *Lay Counseling, Revised and Updated: Equipping Christians for a Helping Ministry*, Revised edition (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2016)

6.8.1 Recruiting Lay Counselors

Recruiting lay counselors is a crucial step in establishing a lay counseling ministry within a local church, constituting one of its most vital aspects. Several recruitment models exist, necessitating careful evaluation to ensure alignment with the unique needs and cultural dynamics of the church community. Central to this recruitment endeavor is the pivotal process of casting a vision, aimed at engaging and enlisting the volunteers essential for the ministry's effectiveness. For further elaboration on this topic, please refer to Chapter 2 for a more detailed exploration.

6.8.2 Vision Casting

Vision is the capacity to convey a compelling image that enables others to grasp the significance of a cause and become actively involved in its pursuit for the glory of God. According to Dale Galloway, author of "20/20 Vision," vision in the Bible refers to

the divine ability to perceive future realities that have yet to materialize.[13] Casting vision emerges as a critical task in establishing new ministries within a local church, where the vision is presented to church leaders, seeking endorsement from the pastor, church board, and congregation.

6.8.3 Presentation to the Church Leadership

Securing the backing of church leadership hinges on effectively articulating a vision for lay counseling. This entails adeptly communicating the robust theological foundation underpinning a lay counseling ministry and, consequently, a training program for lay counselors. Should support from the church board falter, establishing an organized lay counseling ministry becomes challenging.[14] A key skill for a successful pastor involves anticipating potential obstacles or threats in ministry and devising appropriate strategies. To enhance the likelihood of garnering support, it is advisable for a director to personally engage with those expressing hesitation or ambivalence, elucidating the significance of the endeavor. Following approval from the church board, a comprehensive briefing session for the new ministry should be conducted for the congregation.

6.8.4 Presentation to the Congregation

The congregation's receptiveness to a Christian counseling ministry hinges on its biblical foundation and perceived effectiveness. A compelling presentation to the congregation is essential, one that captivates their interest and instills confidence in the ministry's potential. It should emphasize the necessity of counseling within the local

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[13] D.E. Galloway, *20 20 Vision* (Scott Publishing/Twenty-Twenty Vision, Incorporated, 1986), 29, https://books.google.com/books?id=WydAnQEACAAJ.

[14] William Beausay, *The Leadership Genius of Jesus: Ancient Wisdom for Modern Business* (Nashville, Tenn.: T. Nelson, 1997), 25.

church and its anticipated impact. Key biblical references underpinning lay counseling should be communicated, such as the universal priesthood of believers (1 Peter 2:5) and the call for mutual ministry to foster maturity in Christ (Ephesians 4). Additionally, Ephesians 4:15-16 underscores the laity's role in discipleship and service in God's kingdom. Galatians 6:2 emphasizes the communal responsibility of bearing each other's burdens, aligning with the ministry's ethos. Exodus 15:26 reinforces the divine aspect of healing, encouraging believers to partake in God's work of healing others. For further elaboration on this topic, please refer to Chapter 4 for a more detailed exploration.

6.8.5 The necessity of a lay counseling ministry

Larry Crabb advocates for the local church to take on the responsibility of caring for and counseling troubled individuals, emphasizing its capability to facilitate their journey towards full, productive, and creative lives. In light of the escalating personal challenges and societal complexities, Crabb underscores the indispensable need for counseling,[15] both within secular and Christian contexts in India. Pastors recognize the growing severity of social and familial issues, prompting a necessity for counseling ministries within their congregations. This recognition stems from the realization that pastors alone cannot effectively address the increasingly serious problems faced by their communities. Moreover, Christian counselors offer a unique perspective, grounded in the belief that the core issue afflicting humanity is their separation from God, distinct from secular viewpoints on human problems.

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[15] Larry Crabb, *Basic Principles of Biblical Counseling* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Pub. House, 1975), 16.

6.8.6 Introducing goals of lay counseling ministry

The counseling ministry's vision statement will emphasize the provision of Christian care and guidance to troubled individuals within the community. This vision entails offering diverse counseling services tailored to address the needs of those in distress. These services encompass individual, group, couple's, telephone, and online counseling. Additionally, preventive counseling programs, such as premarital guidance, marriage enrichment, and counseling education, will be implemented. Various self-help groups, including anger and stress management, as well as support for singles, will be available. Furthermore, the church will establish a comprehensive training program for lay counselors, spanning a year and covering essential listening and assistance skills.

6.8.7 Need for lay counselors

To achieve the objectives and anticipated results, congregational support for the ministry is crucial, encompassing prayer, volunteerism, and financial contributions. Lay counselors play an indispensable role in the lay counseling ministry, and their recruitment involves several steps. Initial announcements for lay counselor recruitment will be made via the Sunday bulletin over a month-long period. Subsequently, the director of lay counseling will conduct meetings with prospective candidates, evaluating their qualities and giftedness. Candidates deemed suitable will then undergo counseling courses and training aligned with the ministry's curriculum. Upon completion, lay counselors will function as paraprofessionals within the counseling ministry. To ensure their effectiveness, counselors will receive guidance on selecting suitable counseling roles, with some individuals potentially directed to professional counseling institutions for further training.

6.8.8 Selection of Lay Counselors

Tan emphasizes the critical importance of careful selection in ensuring the effectiveness of lay counseling ministries, echoing the sentiments of many in the field.[16] He draws parallels from the New Testament, particularly Jesus' intentional formation of a select group of twelve disciples, showcasing the strategic nature of targeted recruitment and training.[17] Matthew's narrative underscores Jesus' deliberate choice in empowering this chosen group for ministry, underscoring the value of intentional selection. Although the specific criteria for selecting lay counselors may differ among churches or centers, certain recommendations can offer valuable guidance in this process.

6.8.9 A Training Model for Lay Counselors in Thane City Churches

The training program for lay counselors at Thane City Churches will be structured into three phases, each spanning ten weeks. Phase I will focus on laying the foundational principles of lay counseling, Phase II will concentrate on imparting counseling skills, and Phase III will emphasize Christian cognitive therapy. Class will be held once a week, lasting for three hours, with each class featuring an "ice breaker" activity. Phase I will conclude after the third week in September, followed by a one-week break. Phase II will commence in the first week of October and conclude after the third week in October, followed by a one-week break. Finally, Phase III is scheduled to begin in the first week of November and ends after the third week in November the fourth week of November will be the final week for Reflections, doubts and clarifications. The requirements will also be continued stimulatingly mentioned in the above 6.8.a. to 6.8.e. general information paragraphs. The months and weeks could be flexible of each church as per their conveniences

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[16] Tan, Scalise, and Clinton, *Lay Counseling, Revised and Updated*, 97.

[17] James Richard Dyke, "Developing a Model for Lay Leadership Training through Small Groups" (1991), 40.

Phase I: Bases for Lay Christian Counseling

Phase I of the lay counselor training program focuses on establishing the biblical foundations for counseling and specifically for lay Christian counseling. It includes the integration of theology and psychology, exploration of different types of Christian counseling, and a basic comprehension of psychological issues related to human development. Lay counselors will also be introduced to prominent secular counseling approaches such as Freud's psychoanalysis theory, client-centered theory, and behavioral theory. Additionally, they will gain insight into various human developmental stages and the associated psychological issues, with teachings drawn from Erik Erickson's theory. Each session will feature a combination of lectures and either demonstrations or role plays.

Phase I of Training Model for Lay Counselors in Thane City Churches

Bases for Counseling Ministry

Class 1- Biblical bases for counseling ministry, Biblical bases for lay counseling ministry and Integration between theology and psychology

Class 2- View of "Nouthetic Counseling" and "Biblical Counseling", Object relations theory and Client-centered approach

Class 3- Behavioral approach, Gestalt approach, Transactional analysis and Developmental issues

Class 1- Biblical bases for counseling ministry, Biblical bases for lay counseling ministry and Integration between theology and psychology

In the introductory session, applicants for lay counseling will articulate their motivations and expectations for joining the ministry, while the focus remains on establishing the biblical and theological foundations of counseling ministry. Trainees will explore key Bible passages concerning counseling, such as "admonish one another" (Romans 15:14) and "encourage one another" (Hebrews 3:13), alongside delving into

biblical terms related to counseling in both the Old and New Testaments. Additionally, the session will highlight the role of church counseling within pastoral care, emphasizing the importance of addressing emotional issues and fostering spiritual growth, with further elaboration provided in chapter 4 of this dissertation. Assigned readings from Mark R. McMinn's "Psychology, Theology, and Spirituality" will complement discussions, prompting reflection and questions in their reading logs.

In the following session, lay counselors will reflect on their previous experiences in church service, contemplating both positive and negative outcomes. Discussions will focus on clarifying the biblical understanding of "laity" and "ministers," emphasizing the role of all believers as ministers serving God within the community. Explorations into the effectiveness of Christian counseling conducted by lay counselors will prompt reflection on the necessity of counseling within the Church, complemented by research into existing lay counseling ministries and their services. Which is explained in detail in 4th chapter of this dissertaation Assigned readings from Mark R. McMinn's book "Psychology, Theology and Spirituality."[18] will further enrich discussions, stimulating critical thinking and inquiry in their reading logs.

Subsequently, lay counselors will delve into the relationship between theology and psychology, reflecting on insights gleaned from previous sessions. Discussions will center on whether psychology and the Bible are adversaries or allies, with emphasis on the integration of insights from secular psychology into Christian counseling. The session will underscore the importance of critically evaluating this integration to prevent syncretism and maintain the integrity of Christian faith. Lay counselors will engage in critical reflection on the nature of Christian counseling and its distinctions from secular approaches, supported by readings from Stanton L. Jones and Richard E. Butman's

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[18] Mark R. McMinn, *Psychology, Theology, and Spirituality in Christian Counseling*, AACC Counseling Library (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House, 1996).

"Modern Psychotherapies."[19] This class will further deepen their understanding of the interplay between psychology and theology within the context of counseling ministry.

Class 2- View of "Nouthetic Counseling" and "Biblical Counseling", Object relations theory and Client-centered approach

In the this class, lay counselors will embark on a comprehensive exploration of counseling methodologies, with a particular focus on the contrasting approaches of "Nouthetic Counseling" and "Biblical Counseling." Through a critical analysis of Jay Adams' Nouthetic Counseling, characterized by its staunch rejection of the integration between psychology and theology, and Lawrence Crabb's Biblical Counseling, which embraces an integrative model, counselors will gain insight into the theological and methodological disparities between the two paradigms.[20] While Adams advocates for a sole reliance on biblical principles for counseling, Crabb and proponents of biblical counseling emphasize the integration of psychological insights with biblical truths to provide practical guidance. The session will underscore the importance of evaluating counseling methodologies through the lens of scripture while acknowledging the contributions of natural revelation, including the science of psychology. Following this exploration, counselors will engage in a discussion to discern the distinctions between Nouthetic counseling and biblical counseling, laying the groundwork for deeper reflection through assigned readings from Stanton L. Jones and Richard E. Butman's "Modern Psychotherapies."[21]

Transitioning to the next topic, lay counselors will delve into the principles of object relations theory within counseling practice, building upon the foundational understanding gained from previous discussions. Object relations theory, originating as

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[19] Stanton L. Jones and Richard E. Butman, *Modern Psychotherapies: A Comprehensive Christian Appraisal*, 2nd ed (Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP Academic, 2011).

[20] Collins, *Lay Counseling within the Local Church*, 155–59.

[21] Jones and Butman, *Modern Psychotherapies*.

an offshoot of psychoanalytic theory, prioritizes interpersonal relationships and explores the impact of past relationships on an individual's present experiences. Through an examination of key concepts such as "objects," "relations," and "representations," counselors will gain insight into how inner images of the self and others manifest in interpersonal dynamics. The session will encourage counselors to explore the interconnectedness between external and internal worlds, shedding light on the role of both observable objects and psychological representations in shaping individual experiences. Homework assignments, including readings from James F. Masterson's "The Search for the Real Self,"[22] chapter 1 to 3 will provide counselors with an opportunity for further exploration and reflection on the concepts introduced.

Concluding the series of topics, lay counselors will embark on an exploration of Carl Rogers' client-centered theory, emphasizing the importance of empathy, genuineness, and unconditional positive regard within the counseling relationship. Rogers' humanistic approach, grounded in the belief in individuals' inherent capacity for growth and self-actualization, will prompt counselors to reflect on the implications of these principles from a Christian perspective. Through discussions on the strengths and weaknesses of Rogers' view of humankind, counselors will engage in critical reflection on the compatibility of client-centered therapy with Christian principles.[23] Homework assignments, including a reflective paper and readings from Stanton L. Jones and Richard E. Butman's "Modern Psychotherapies," will further facilitate counselors' exploration of the intersection between counseling theory and Christian worldview.

Class 3- Behavioral approach, Gestalt approach, Transactional analysis and Developmental issues.

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[22] James F. Masterson, *The Search for the Real Self: Unmasking the Personality Disorders of Our Age* (New York, London: Free Press ; Collier Macmillan, 1988).

[23] Gary Collins, *The Biblical Basis of Christian Counseling for People Helpers: Relating the Basic Teachings of Scripture to People's Problems*, New edition (NavPress, 2014), 100–123.

In the this class, lay counselors will embark on a journey into the realm of behavioral psychology, where the focus shifts from the complexities of the mind to observable behavior. This paradigm, exemplified by pioneers like Pavlov and Skinner, emphasizes the influence of external stimuli and consequences on human behavior. Through a comprehensive exploration of classical conditioning and operant conditioning, counselors will gain insight into the mechanisms underlying learned behaviors. Pavlov's classical conditioning, demonstrated through the famous example of his salivating dogs, highlights the association between stimuli and responses, while Skinner's operant conditioning elucidates how behavior is shaped by its consequences.[24] The session will encourage counselors to reflect on their own experiences through the lens of these behavioral principles, paving the way for deeper understanding and application. Homework assignments, including readings from chapter 6 of Stanton L. Jones and Richard E. Butman's "Modern Psychotherapies," will provide counselors with an opportunity for further exploration and reflection on the behavioral approach.

Transitioning to the subsequent session, lay counselors will immerse themselves in the Gestalt approach, a therapeutic framework characterized by its emphasis on holistic experiences and the unity of mind, body, and feelings. Originating from the insights of Fritz Perls, Gestalt therapy underscores the importance of awareness, authenticity, and personal responsibility in fostering growth and self-actualization.[25] Through an exploration of key concepts such as organismic needs and the here-and-now experience, counselors will delve into the core principles of Gestalt therapy. The session will invite counselors to reflect on their own experiences of living "in the present," fostering introspection and self-awareness. Homework assignments, including readings from Spencer Johnson's "The Present: The Secret to Enjoying Your Work and Life Now,"[26]

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[24] Collins, 200–220.

[25] Jones and Butman, *Modern Psychotherapies*, 305.

[26] S. Johnson, *The Present: The Secret to Enjoying Your Work and Life, Now!* (Bantam, 2006).

and Stanton L. Jones and Richard E. Butman's "Modern Psychotherapies," chapter 12 will provide counselors with additional insights and opportunities for self-reflection.

Continuing the journey, lay counselors will delve into the realm of Transactional Analysis (TA), a widely acclaimed method of counseling that explores the dynamics of interpersonal transactions and ego states. Through an exploration of Berne's conceptualization of Parent, Adult, and Child ego states, counselors will gain insight into the complexities of human interaction and the role of early experiences in shaping personality. The session will delve into the four life positions proposed by TA, offering counselors a framework for understanding the dynamics of human relationships and self-perception. Homework assignments, including analyses of interpersonal interactions in different ego states and readings from Stanton L. Jones and Richard E. Butman's "Modern Psychotherapies," will facilitate counselors' exploration and application of TA principles.

Concluding the series of sessions, lay counselors will embark on an exploration of developmental issues across the lifespan, from childhood through old age. Drawing from biblical perspectives on child-rearing and the challenges faced by adolescents, middle-aged individuals, and older adults, counselors will gain insight into the multifaceted nature of human development. The session will encourage counselors to reflect on their own experiences and assumptions about aging and the various developmental stages, fostering empathy and understanding in their counseling practice. [27] Homework assignments, including readings from Stanton L. Jones and Richard E. Butman's "Modern Psychotherapies," will provide counselors with additional perspectives on developmental issues and opportunities for reflection on their counseling approach.

Homework for the week off.

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[27] Collins, *The Biblical Basis of Christian Counseling for People Helpers*, 171–213.

Following the discussion on developmental issues, lay counselors will engage in a reflective exercise aimed at identifying the developmental stage that resonates most with their own personal challenges. Drawing from Erik Erikson's model of psychosocial development, which outlines eight distinct stages, counselors will analyze the underlying causes of their struggles within the context of these developmental milestones. By aligning their experiences with Erikson's framework, counselors will gain deeper insight into the root causes of their problems and how they may relate to broader patterns of human development.

As part of their homework assignment, counselors will be tasked with crafting an evaluation paper focusing on Phase 1 of their personal development journey. This paper will provide an opportunity for counselors to critically reflect on their experiences in light of Erikson's first stage, which centers on the tension between trust and mistrust during infancy. By examining their early experiences and the formation of trust in infancy, counselors will gain valuable insights into the foundational aspects of their development and how these experiences continue to shape their lives. Through this process of introspection and analysis, counselors will deepen their understanding of themselves and their potential for growth and healing.

Phase II: Training Model for Lay Counselors in Thane City Churches

Acquisition of Counseling Skills

Phase II will include the teaching of counseling process and several skills for counseling, such as building rapport, listening attentively, handling silence, questioning wisely, and using spiritual resources. Lay counselors need to have mastered the counseling process and the basic skills of counseling. The Phase II format is made up of discussion, performances of specific counseling skills for the lay counselor lay counselors to view, and lectures.

Class 1 The Counseling Process, Listening skills and basic Empathy

Class 2 The Practice of Empathy, Asking Questions and Probing and summarizing

Class 3 Confrontation, Prayer in Counseling and Forgiveness in Counseling

Class 1 The Counseling Process, Listening skills and basic Empathy

In this class, lay counselors will engage in an immersive learning experience encompassing the fundamental components of the counseling process, improving their skills under the guidance of established texts. Emphasizing the sequential steps delineated by Brammer, Abrego, and Shostrom, authors of the book called *"Therapeutic counselling and Psychotherapy,"*[28] the class aims to cultivate a robust understanding of counseling dynamics. Through the lens of K. M. Colby's comprehensive guide, "*A Primer for Psychotherapists*," participants will delve into the intricacies of establishing rapport, problem identification, facilitating therapeutic change, and evaluating outcomes.[29] By integrating theory with practice, lay counselors will navigate the nuanced terrain of client engagement, goal setting, and intervention strategies, thus laying the groundwork for effective counseling practices.

Subsequently, the class will transition to an exploration of active listening skills, a pivotal aspect of counselor-client interaction. Drawing inspiration from biblical principles and contemporary counseling literature, lay counselors will delve into the profound impact of attentive listening on fostering rapport and empathy. Leveraging insights from Egan's seminal work, "The Skilled Helper," participants will immerse themselves in techniques aimed at deciphering verbal and nonverbal cues, thereby deepening their understanding of clients' experiences.[30] Through experiential exercises and guided

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[28] Lawrence M. Brammer, Philip J. Abrego, and Everett L.. Shostrom, *Therapeutic Counseling and Psychotherapy*, 6th ed (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1993), 78.

[29] Kenneth Mark Colby, *A Primer for Psychotherapists* (New York: Ronald Press, 1951), 109.

[30] Gerard Egan, *The Skilled Helper: A Problem-Management and Opportunity-Development Approach to Helping*, 10th ed (Belmont, Calif: Brooks/Cole, Cengage Learning, 2014), 65–66.

reflections, lay counselors will refine their ability to offer empathetic responses, establishing a solid foundation for compassionate counseling practices.

Finally, the class will delve into the intricacies of basic empathy, unraveling the multifaceted layers of understanding and meaning in client narratives. Grounded in the principles outlined in book "*The Practice of Counseling*," by Jang Ho Lee & Myung Jah Gum [31] lay counselors will embark on a journey to develop profound emotional attunement and communication skills. By mastering the art of empathetic responses, participants will cultivate a therapeutic presence that fosters trust and validation, essential elements in the counseling process. Through experiential learning and reflective exercises, lay counselors will hone their ability to navigate the complexities of human emotion, paving the way for transformative client interactions.

Class 2 The Practice of Empathy, Asking Questions and Probing and summarizing

In this class, lay counselors will delve into the nuanced practice of empathy, a cornerstone of effective counseling. Drawing insights from Jang Ho Lee and Myung Jah Gum's "*The Practice of Counseling*," participants will explore the five levels of empathy, ranging from mere recognition of feelings to profound understanding of their deeper meanings. Through experiential exercises and group discussions, lay counselors will hone their empathetic abilities, deciphering clients' emotional landscapes and offering nuanced responses that reflect genuine understanding. By immersing themselves in the complexities of empathetic communication, participants will cultivate a therapeutic presence that fosters trust and validation, paving the way for transformative client interactions.

Subsequently, the class will pivot to an exploration of question-asking techniques, of questions developed by, Richard Bandler and John Grinder's they developed "meta-

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[31] Jang Ho Lee and Myung Jah Gum, *The Practice of Counseling* (Seoul: Bubmoonsa, 1992).

model" for analysing the counseling language mentioned in their book the structure of magic chapter 4 and 5. [32] The lay counselors will also dissect the various types of questions employed in counseling practice. From surface structure inquiries to deeper explorations of reference structure, deletion, generalization, and distortion, participants will unravel the intricate layers of client communication. Through guided readings and practical exercises, lay counselors will sharpen their questioning skills, learning to elicit meaningful insights and facilitate deeper self-exploration in their clients.

Finally, the class will delve into the art of probing and summarizing, essential tools for guiding clients through the counseling process. Grounded in the principles outlined in Egan's "Exercises in Helping Skills" [33] and Jang Ho Lee and Myung Jah Gum's "Manual of Counseling Practice," [34] lay counselors will explore the intricacies of probing techniques aimed at fostering clarity and exploration in client narratives. Additionally, participants will learn the art of summarizing, a skill crucial for synthesizing client insights and promoting focus in counseling sessions. Through practical exercises and reflective discussions, lay counselors will refine their probing and summarizing skills, equipping themselves with essential tools for facilitating meaningful client progress and growth. [35]

Class 3 Confrontation, Prayer in Counseling and Forgiveness in Counseling

In this class, lay counselors will explore the delicate art of confrontation in counseling, drawing insights from the comprehensive guidelines outlined in their readings from the book *"The Counseling Process,"* by Daniel J Delaney and Sheldon Eisenberg chapter 6[36] and chapter 9,10 and 11 from the book "*The Skilled Helper"* by

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[32] Richard Bandler and John Grinder, *The Structure of Magic: A Book about Language and Therapy* (Palo Alto, Calif.: Science and Behavior Books, 1975).

[33] Egan, *The Skilled Helper*.

[34] Lee and Gum, *The Practice of Counseling*.

[35] Lee and Gum, 91–100.

[36] Sheldon Eisenberg and Daniel J. Delaney, *The Counseling Process*, 2d ed, Rand McNally Education Series (Chicago: Rand McNally College Pub. Co., 1977).

Gerard Egan.[37] Rooted in Brammer, Abrego, and Shostrom's framework, participants will dissect the multifaceted nature of confrontation, which serves as a catalyst for self-awareness and behavioral change in clients. Through engaging discussions and practical exercises, lay counselors will learn to navigate the intricacies of challenging dysfunctional mindsets, self-limiting internal actions, and problematic external behaviors with sensitivity and skill. By mastering the principles of effective confrontation, participants will empower their clients to embrace new perspectives and transformative growth, fostering a climate of honesty and authenticity in the counseling relationship. The reading for this particular

Subsequently, the class will delve into the pivotal role of Prayer in Christian counseling, as elucidated by McMinn's insights. Participants will explore the nuanced dynamics of incorporating prayer into the counseling process, balancing spiritual sensitivity with therapeutic efficacy. Drawing upon biblical principles and clinical wisdom, lay counselors will learn to navigate the complexities of exploring clients' prayer lives with sensitivity and respect, recognizing the profound impact of spirituality on mental health outcomes. Through interactive discussions and case studies, participants will deepen their understanding of the therapeutic potential of prayer, cultivating a holistic approach to counseling that integrates spiritual principles with psychological insights.

Finally, the class will delve into the transformative power of forgiveness in the counseling process, guided by McMinn's comprehensive framework. Participants will grapple with the complexities of forgiveness, recognizing its profound implications for healing and reconciliation. Drawing upon biblical wisdom and psychological principles, lay counselors will explore the nuances of forgiveness, balancing the imperative of extending grace with the necessity of maintaining healthy boundaries. Through reflective

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[37] Egan, *The Skilled Helper*.

discussions and experiential exercises, participants will deepen their understanding of forgiveness as a therapeutic process, equipping themselves to walk alongside clients on the journey toward wholeness and restoration. For more detailed explanation please look chapter 4 of this dissertation.

Phase III Training Model for Lay Counselors in Thane City Churches

Christian Cognitive Counseling

Learning cognitive therapy helps lay counselors build their counseling ability. It enables them to clarify the goals and processes of treatment, to train the client to anticipate the future, and to understand the process of counseling. The cognitive approach is an appropriate method for lay Christian counselors for several ressons. First of all, the training in cognitive therapy is short-term: it is completed in ten to twenty sessions. Most Koreans are too busy today to be trained or counseled for a Jong-term period, so short-term programs seem to be more appropriate. Second, the clients and counselors work together in finding the aspects of the clients' problematic thinking. Koreans society has stunningly shifted from authoritarianism to democracy, and as a result, many Koreans are wary of authoritative figures and engaging in communication that seems one-sided or didactic. Third, the effectiveness of cognitive therapy has been demonstrated in regards to youth counseling: many counselors think that cognitive therapy is more effective than others in Korea, 269 Fourth, lay counselors can become skilled at cognitive therapy techniques quickly because it is very structured. Fifth, the techniques of cognitive therapy offer benefits to lay counselors as well as to their clients. Sixth, cognitive therapy techniques are well suited for Christian clients because of at least two reasons: first, through cognitive therapy, clients can compare their thoughts with biblical truth, and change them if they are irrational or unbiblical; and second, cognitive therapy focuses on current problems rather than past problems, which reduces the vulnerability of the experience.

In Phase III, lay counselors at Thane city churches will learn theories of Christian cognitive therapy. A primary text is McMinn's Cognitive Therapy Techniques in Christian Conseling Another text is Judith S. Beck's Cognitive Therapy: Basic and Beyond. The references for cognitive therapy are Jacqueline B. Persons Cognitive Therapy in Practice, William Backus' Telling the Truth to Troubled People, and Jeffrey E. Young and Janet S. Klosko's Reinventing Your Life. An overview of the topics covered can be seen below.

Class 1 Overview of Cognitive Therapy, Christian and Cognitive Therapy and Finding Automatic Thoughts

Class 2 Evaluating Automatic Thoughts, Responding to Automatic Thoughts and Identifying and Modifying Intermediate Beliefs

Class 3 Finding and Changing Core Beliefs, Finding and Coping with "Lifetraps", Additional Behavioral Techniques and Maintenance

Class 1 Overview of Cognitive Therapy, Christian and Cognitive Therapy and Finding Automatic Thoughts (Cognitive Therapy Technique in Christian Counseling, Chapter 2, 3 and 5)

In this class, the basic principles of cognitive therapy will be presented. Cognitive therapy was developed by Aaron T. Beck at the University of Pennsylvania in the early 1960s. Rooted in the pioneering work of Aaron T. Beck and Albert Ellis, cognitive therapy posits that individuals' thoughts significantly influence their emotions and behaviors. Through engaging discussions and experiential exercises, participants will delve into the "ABC" principle, which delineates how activating events trigger automatic thoughts, subsequently influencing consequent emotions. Drawing parallels between cognitive therapy principles and biblical teachings, lay counselors will reflect on the interplay between thoughts, beliefs, and feelings in their own recent experiences,

fostering deeper insight into the cognitive underpinnings of human behavior. [38] For homework, participants will delve into Chapter Two of Beck's seminal text, reinforcing their understanding of cognitive therapy concepts and principles.

Subsequently, the class will pivot to an exploration of the intersection between Christian faith and cognitive therapy, as expounded in "Cognitive Therapy Techniques in Christian Counseling" by Judith S. Beck. Participants will delve into the transformative potential of cognitive counseling in fostering critical thinking and truth-seeking in alignment with biblical teachings. Drawing inspiration from Paul's exhortation in Romans 12:2 and Philippians 4:8, lay counselors will explore how cognitive therapy techniques empower clients to challenge dysfunctional thought patterns and embrace flexible, truth-centered thinking. Through interactive discussions and case studies, participants will examine the role of rigid personal rules in shaping clients' perceptions and behaviors, discerning how the transformative power of God's grace paves the way for authenticity and growth.[39] For homework, participants will delve into Chapter Three of Beck's text, reflecting on the nuances of rigid rules and the transformative touch of God in the counseling process.

Lastly, lay counselors will delve into the practical techniques of identifying automatic thoughts, as outlined in "Cognitive Therapy Techniques in Christian Counseling" by Judith S. Beck. Grounded in the premise that thoughts drive emotions and behaviors, cognitive counseling emphasizes the identification and evaluation of automatic thoughts to alleviate distress and facilitate lasting change. Through a systematic exploration of the six-step cognitive counseling process, participants will learn to identify problem thoughts, dispute automatic thoughts, and uncover underlying core beliefs, ultimately fostering symptom relief and deeper insight. Drawing upon Beck's

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[38] Mark R. McMinn, *Cognitive Therapy Techniques in Christian Counseling*, Resources for Christian Counseling, v. 27 (Dallas: Word Pub., 1991), 23.

[39] McMinn, 33–51.

insights, participants will engage in practical exercises to identify their own automatic thoughts regarding recent experiences, honing their skills in cognitive assessment and intervention. [40] For homework, participants will utilize the Dysfunctional Thoughts Record to record and evaluate their automatic thoughts, reinforcing their understanding of cognitive therapy techniques.

Class 2 Evaluating Automatic Thoughts, Responding to Automatic Thoughts and Identifying and Modifying Intermediate Beliefs (Cognitive Therapy Technique in Christian Counseling, Chapter 8, 9 and 10)

In this class, lay counselors will embark on a comprehensive exploration of evaluating and responding to automatic thoughts, drawing insights from "Cognitive Therapy" by Judith S. Beck. Rooted in the pioneering work of Aaron T. Beck and Albert Ellis, the session will delve into Beck's method of evaluating automatic thoughts, particularly relevant for counseling ministries in cultures where emotional reactions often overshadow logical analysis.[41] Participants will familiarize themselves with Beck's Six Questions to Test Automatic Thoughts, enabling them to systematically assess the evidence supporting or refuting automatic thoughts. Through interactive exercises, lay counselors will hone their skills in identifying cognitive distortions such as all-or-nothing thinking and catastrophizing, equipping them to guide clients towards more adaptive thought patterns. For homework, participants will apply Beck's questions to evaluate their own automatic thoughts, fostering deeper insight into cognitive assessment and intervention techniques.

Beck's Six Questions to Test Automatic Thoughts[42]

Beck's Six Questions to Test Automatic Thoughts

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[40] McMinn, 80.

[41] McMinn, 48.

[42] McMinn, 109.

What is the evidence that supports this idea? What is the evidence against this idea? Is there an alternative explanation?

What is the worst that could happen? What is the best that could happen?

What is the effect of my believing the automatic thought?

What could be the effect of changing my thinking?

What should I do about it?

What would I tell a friend if he or she were in the same situation?

Learning to evaluate automatic thoughts is a skill. Some people grasp it right away, but others need much repeated, guided practice.

Subsequently, the class will pivot to an exploration of responding to automatic thoughts, as outlined in "Cognitive Therapy" by Judith S. Beck. Building upon the evaluation process, participants will learn how to fortify adaptive viewpoints through the use of the Dysfunctional Thought Record (DTR). Guided by practical guidelines for utilizing the DTR effectively, lay counselors will gain proficiency in helping clients identify and challenge automatic thoughts, facilitating symptom relief and cognitive restructuring. Through collaborative discussions and case studies, participants will explore strategies for empowering clients to craft written responses to their automatic thoughts, fostering greater self-awareness and resilience.[43] For homework, lay counselors will utilize the DTR to record and analyze their own automatic thoughts, reinforcing their understanding of cognitive therapy techniques.

Lastly, lay counselors will delve into the identification and modification of intermediate beliefs, drawing insights from "Cognitive Therapy" by Judith S. Beck. Rooted in the understanding that intermediate beliefs play a pivotal role in shaping clients' perceptions and behaviors, participants will explore the interconnectedness between core beliefs, intermediate beliefs, and automatic thoughts. Through interactive

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[43] McMinn, 109.

exercises and guided discussions, lay counselors will identify their own intermediate beliefs and discuss strategies for modifying maladaptive thought patterns. By completing a Cognitive Conceptualization Diagram, participants will gain deeper insight into the cognitive underpinnings of human behavior, equipping them to guide clients towards lasting cognitive and emotional transformation.[44] For homework, participants will engage in self-reflection to identify their attitudes, rules, and assumptions, facilitating deeper exploration of cognitive conceptualization techniques.

Class 3 Finding and Changing Core Beliefs, Finding and Coping with "Lifetraps", Additional Behavioral Techniques and Maintenance (Readings from Cognitive Therapy Techniques in Christian Counseling, Chapters 7, 8 and 12 and Reinventing Your Life, Chapters 2-5)

At the core of one's perception lies the foundational concept of core beliefs, as expounded in the Cognitive Therapy Techniques in Christian Counseling. These beliefs, be they positive or negative, form during childhood interactions and shape how individuals perceive reality. Techniques like advantage and disadvantage analysis, contemplative worship, and historical analysis offer avenues for modifying these beliefs. Lay counselors utilize the "Core Beliefs Inventory" by McKay[45] to identify and discuss their own core beliefs, paving the way for transformative introspection guided by McMinn's strategies.[46] Through this process, lay counselors not only gain insight into their own beliefs but also develop a deeper understanding of how these beliefs influence their counseling approach and interactions with clients.

Drawing from Reinventing Your Life, Chapters 2-5, lay counselors explore lifetraps, deep-rooted patterns stemming from childhood experiences. These lifetraps,

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[44] McMinn, 16.

[45] Patrick Fanning and Matthew McKay PhD, *Prisoners of Belief: Exposing and Changing Beliefs That Control Your Life*, Illustrated edition (Oakland, Calif: New Harbinger Publications, 1991), 26.

[46] McMinn, *Cognitive Therapy Techniques in Christian Counseling*, 125–39.

such as abandonment and unrelenting standards, significantly influence one's core beliefs and emotional responses. Through the Lifetrap Questionnaire, counselors identify and share their own lifetraps, initiating a journey of self-discovery and understanding. Homework entails delving into Jeffrey Young and Janet Klosko's book to uncover the roots of these lifetraps, fostering deeper insight into their origins and effects.[47] Armed with this knowledge, counselors are better equipped to empathize with clients and tailor interventions that address underlying lifetraps, facilitating lasting change and emotional well-being.

Behavioral techniques, outlined in Cognitive Therapy Chapter 12, offer practical tools for tackling cognitive distortions and emotional distress. From deep breathing exercises to graded exposure, these techniques empower clients to confront and overcome their challenges. Lay counselors engage in deep breathing relaxation exercises, preparing to guide clients through these practices for enhanced well-being. Homework assignments focus on honing these techniques, ensuring proficiency in both counselors and clients alike. By mastering these techniques, counselors can create a supportive environment where clients feel empowered to explore new coping mechanisms and strategies for managing their mental health.

In the journey towards self-improvement, maintenance is paramount. Lay counselors reflect on their experiences with relaxation exercises, recognizing the importance of ongoing support. Counselor-client relationships evolve over time, transitioning from frequent sessions to less frequent ones as clients gain confidence and self-reliance. Through role-playing scenarios, counselors practice the delicate process of terminating counseling relationships, preparing clients for continued growth beyond the counseling setting. Homework involves delving into McMinn's Cognitive Therapy

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[47] Jeffrey E. Young and Janet S. Klosko, *Reinventing Your Life: The Breakthrough Program to End Negative Behavior ... and Feel Great Again* (New York: Plume, 1994), 15–17.

Techniques in Christian Counseling, fostering realistic expectations and empowering clients to navigate future challenges independently. As counselors and clients navigate this transition, they establish a foundation for long-term success and resilience in managing mental health.

6.8.10 Follow-up Program

A follow-up phase is pivotal phase for lay counselors involves ongoing reading, further study, and training through collaboration with nonprofit counseling centers. This follow-up phase is indispensable for counselors who have completed our training program and commenced their journey into lay counseling. Through continuous engagement, counselors deepen their commitment to the lay counseling ministry, nurturing confidence in their ability to effectively conduct counseling sessions. This structured follow-up not only sustains counselors' involvement but also fosters their growth and development within the counseling framework, thereby contributing to the holistic growth and social transformation of the community in Thane.

6.8.11 Implementation of the Module

Implementing a comprehensive model for equipping lay leaders for Christian counseling in Thane, Maharashtra, India, presents a transformative opportunity within the local church context. By addressing the pressing need for mental health support and counseling services, this model not only fosters church growth but also facilitates social transformation within the community. Through meticulous planning and strategic execution, the lay counseling ministry will serve as a beacon of hope, offering compassionate care and guidance to individuals grappling with various personal, relational, and societal challenges. Moreover, the emphasis on cultural sensitivity and

collaboration with local partners ensures that the program is tailored to meet the specific needs of the Thane community, thus enhancing its effectiveness and relevance.

The implementation of this model underscores the proactive stance of the church in addressing mental health issues and promoting holistic well-being among its members and the wider community. By providing rigorous training and ongoing supervision to lay counselors, the church demonstrates its commitment to upholding ethical standards and ensuring the quality of care delivered. Additionally, the integration of Christian principles with counseling techniques equips lay leaders to offer not only practical support but also spiritual guidance rooted in biblical truth. As a result, the lay counseling ministry becomes a vital component of the church's mission to proclaim the love and compassion of Christ in a tangible and impactful manner.

In conclusion, the proposed model for equipping lay leaders for Christian counseling in Thane, Maharashtra, India, represents a significant step towards addressing the mental health crisis and fostering holistic growth within the local church and community. By embracing the vision of compassionate care, cultural sensitivity, and collaboration, this model has the potential to catalyze profound transformation, touching lives, restoring hope, and advancing the kingdom of God in the city of Thane and beyond. Through diligent implementation and steadfast commitment, the church can emerge as a beacon of light, offering healing and restoration to individuals and families in need, thereby fulfilling its mandate to be salt and light in the world.

6.9 Implication and Conclusion

6.9.1 Addressing Local Needs and Challenges:

1. **Integration of Theology and Psychology**: The integration of theological principles with psychological insights in the proposed model acknowledges the

multifaceted nature of human beings. In Thane City, where individuals often grapple with complex spiritual and emotional issues, this holistic approach is crucial. Lay counselors equipped with this integration can provide support that resonates with the cultural and religious beliefs of the community, fostering trust and rapport with those seeking guidance.

2. **Cultural Sensitivity:** Thane City boasts a richly diverse cultural landscape, with individuals from various backgrounds and traditions. Lay counselors trained in cultural sensitivity can navigate this diversity with respect and understanding, creating a safe and inclusive environment for individuals to explore their faith and address their concerns. By acknowledging and respecting cultural norms and values, lay counselors can effectively connect with individuals and offer support that is culturally relevant and meaningful.

3. **Evidence-Based Counseling Techniques:** The incorporation of evidence-based counseling techniques ensures that lay counselors are equipped with the latest tools and strategies for addressing mental and emotional health concerns. In a dynamic and evolving community like Thane City, where individuals face a myriad of challenges, from economic hardships to interpersonal conflicts, the ability to provide effective counseling is paramount. By staying abreast of the latest research and best practices, lay counselors can tailor their interventions to meet the specific needs of their clients, promoting healing and resilience.

6.9.2 Contributing to Church Growth

1. **Fostering Spiritual Growth:** Lay counseling ministry plays a vital role in fostering spiritual growth within the church community. In Thane City, where individuals may face spiritual doubts or struggles amidst the hustle and bustle of urban life, lay counselors offer a supportive and nurturing environment for

individuals to explore their faith and deepen their relationship with God. Through prayer, reflection, and biblical guidance, lay counselors help individuals navigate life's challenges while strengthening their spiritual foundation.

2. **Building Authentic Community:** The provision of support and encouragement by lay counselors contributes to the creation of authentic and caring communities within the church. In a city like Thane, where individuals may feel isolated or disconnected from others, the sense of belonging fostered by lay counseling ministry is invaluable. As individuals experience healing and restoration through counseling, they are more likely to feel connected to the church community and actively participate in its activities, fostering a sense of belonging and unity.

6.9.3 Contributing to Societal Transformation

1. **Promoting Mental Health Awareness:** Lay counseling initiatives play a crucial role in promoting mental health awareness and reducing stigma surrounding mental illness within the Thane community. In a society where mental health concerns are often misunderstood or ignored, the provision of accessible and non-judgmental support by lay counselors is transformative. By empowering individuals to seek help for their mental health concerns, lay counseling programs contribute to overall well-being and resilience, fostering a healthier and more compassionate community.

2. **Empowering Individuals for Social Change:** Through counseling, individuals are empowered to address not only their personal struggles but also broader social issues affecting the community. In Thane City, where individuals may face socio-economic disparities or discrimination, lay counselors equip individuals with the skills and resources they need to advocate for social justice and equality. By nurturing resilience and coping skills, lay counselors empower individuals to

become agents of change in their families, workplaces, and neighborhoods, thereby catalyzing broader societal transformation.

6.10 Conclusion

In conclusion, the proposed model for equipping lay leaders for Christian counseling in Thane City holds immense promise for addressing local needs, fostering church growth, and contributing to societal transformation. By prioritizing cultural sensitivity, integrating theology and psychology, and incorporating evidence-based practices, lay counseling initiatives have the potential to create a more compassionate, resilient, and inclusive community in Thane, Maharashtra, India, and beyond. Through collaborative efforts and a commitment to continuous improvement, stakeholders can harness the power of faith and compassion to create healthier, more resilient communities where individuals can thrive and flourish.

**A MODEL FOR EQUIPPING LAY LEADERS FOR
CHRISTIAN COUNSELING AS PART OF CHURCH
GROWTH AND SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION IN THE
CITY OF THANE, MAHARASHTRA, INDIA**

Questionnaire

About Interviewer:

My name is Sanath Kumar Chandrahas Putla, and I work as an Associate Pastor at Thane Prayer Tower Church in Thane. Since 2021, I've been Perceiving Doctor of Ministry degree in Pastoral Education at International Theological Seminary in California, USA. As part of my studies, I need to write a dissertation to complete my degree. Here's a quick summary of what my dissertation is about. Thank you for taking the time to help me with this.

Equipping Lay Leaders for Christian Counseling

Introduction:

In Thane, Maharashtra, India, the convergence of diverse cultures and societal dynamics shapes the fabric of community life. Within this context, Christian lay leaders play a crucial role in providing counseling and support, essential for both individual well-being and the broader societal transformation. This research endeavours to unravel the intricate landscape of Christian lay counseling in Thane, delving into the interplay of cultural, contextual, and theological factors that influence its efficacy. Drawing on the insights of Hunter P. Mabry, this study employs a mixed-methods research design to comprehensively explore the preparation of lay leaders for Christian counseling.

Central to our investigation are inquiries into the cultural and contextual dynamics impacting Christian lay counseling, the perceptions of mental health within the Christian community, the challenges faced by counseling leaders, and the strategies necessary for their effective equipping. Through purposive sampling, the aim to assemble a diverse cohort of pastors and lay leaders, ensuring a representative range of perspectives. By rigorously examining and triangulating data, the goal to find pragmatic solutions rooted in Thane's cultural tapestry. Together, through collaborative exploration, the aspire to illuminate pathways for enhancing Christian lay counseling practices, fostering positive change at the intersection of faith and society, and offering hope to communities in need.

Additionally, based on the research methodology outlined in the dissertation, a questionnaire has been developed to gather data on the factors influencing the preparation of lay leaders for Christian counseling and its impact on church growth and societal transformation in Thane, Maharashtra, India. The questionnaire utilizes a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree" for participants to indicate their level of agreement with each statement. This instrument will serve as a valuable tool in collecting empirical evidence to complement the qualitative insights gained through interviews and observations, further enriching our understanding of Christian lay counseling dynamics in the region.

Demographic Information: Please provide the following demographic details:

1. Gender: [Male / Female / Other]

2. Age: [Specify age range: _____]

3. Educational Background: [High School / Bachelor's Degree / Master's Degree / Doctorate / Other (please specify)]

4. What is your role in the church? [Pastor / Lay Leader / Member / Other (please specify_____)]

Perceptions of Cultural and Contextual Factors: Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:

1. The cultural diversity of Thane significantly influences the effectiveness of Christian lay counseling.

    - Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree Reason (if any): _____

2. Contextual factors such as economic status and education level play a crucial role in shaping the success of Christian counseling initiatives in Thane.

    - Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree Reason (if any): _____

3. The availability of mental health resources in Thane impacts the accessibility and utilization of lay counseling services within Christian communities.

    - Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree Reason (if any): _____

4. The level of community engagement and support affects the effectiveness of lay counseling programs in addressing diverse needs within Thane.

    - Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree Reason (if any): _____

Utilization of Lay Counseling Services: Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:

1. The Christian community in Thane actively seeks and values lay counseling services as a means of support and guidance.

    - Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree Reason (if any): _____

2. Awareness of available counseling resources positively influences individuals' willingness to seek and utilize lay counseling services within Christian communities in Thane.

   - Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree Reason (if any): _____

3. The accessibility of lay counseling services, both geographically and financially, impacts the extent to which individuals engage with them.

   - Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree Reason (if any): _____

4. The effectiveness of lay counseling services in addressing specific cultural and contextual needs influences their utilization within Christian communities in Thane.

   - Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree Reason (if any): _____

Challenges faced by Lay Counseling Leaders: Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:

1. Limited resources and funding present significant challenges for Christian lay counseling leaders in implementing effective programs in Thane.

   - Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree Reason (if any): _____

2. Cultural differences and language barriers pose challenges for lay counseling leaders in effectively communicating and addressing the needs of diverse communities in Thane.

   - Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree Reason (if any): _____

3. The stigma surrounding mental health within certain cultural contexts in Thane creates obstacles for lay counseling leaders in providing support and intervention.

   - Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree Reason (if any): _____

4. Limited access to specialized training and ongoing professional development opportunities hinders the effectiveness of lay counseling leaders in Thane.

   - Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree Reason (if any): _____

Strategies for Equipping Lay Counseling Leaders: Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:

1. Developing comprehensive and culturally sensitive training programs is essential for equipping lay counseling leaders for effective ministry growth in Thane.

   - Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree Reason (if any): _____

2. Collaborating with local mental health organizations and professionals enhances the effectiveness and sustainability of lay counseling initiatives in Thane.

   - Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree Reason (if any): _____

3. Establishing mentorship programs and peer support networks provides valuable guidance and encouragement for lay counseling leaders in Thane.

   - Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree Reason (if any): _____

4. Implementing community outreach and awareness campaigns helps destigmatize mental health issues and increase acceptance of lay counseling services within Thane.

- Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree Reason (if any): _____

Theological Foundations and Frameworks: Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:

1. The theological principles guiding Christian lay counseling practices are well-aligned with the cultural and social context of Thane.

    - Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree Reason (if any): _____

2. Emphasizing compassion, empathy, and grace in lay counseling practices reflects the theological foundations of Christian faith and resonates with the community in Thane.

    - Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree Reason (if any): _____

3. Integrating scriptural teachings and doctrinal beliefs into lay counseling approaches enhances their relevance and effectiveness in addressing spiritual and emotional needs in Thane.

    - Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree Reason (if any): _____

4. Providing holistic and person-centered care based on Christian principles fosters a sense of belonging and support within the community in Thane.

    - Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree Reason (if any): _____

This questionnaire aims to collect valuable insights into the perceptions, challenges, and strategies related to equipping lay leaders for Christian counseling in Thane, Maharashtra, India. Your participation is greatly appreciated. Thank you for your time.

APPENDIX B

LAY COUNSELOR AGREEMENT (SAMPLE)

Active Status 20____-20____

As a _____ (Church name) Lay Counselor, I agree to the following for the year:

1. To participate actively in the weekly training meetings of the Lay Courselors, and to complete all the homework assignments of this training

2. To attend all scheduled meetings of this year (20____-20____) missing no more than six, and notifying the Director of Counseling (or another Lay Counselor) in advance of those absences when possible.

3. To be willing to counsel between two and four hours per week.

4. To participate in the Lay Counselor weekend retreat for training and community building.

5. To obtain one hour of supervision per week, or, one hour of supervision for every four hours of counseling, or meeting no less than every other week with supervisor

To complete the necessary statistical information to the Session of the Church for the Director of Counseling's Quarterly Report

7. To pray regularly for any counselors, my fellow counselors, and myself throughout this year.

8. To affirm our commitment to one another in Christian community.

9. To be a member of and/or a regular attender of worship at LCPC (excluding Interns).

10. To maintain the ethical guidelines regarding confidentiality and privileged information.

11. To follow the accepted procedures of our Lay Counseling Ministry.

Signature: Date:

LAY COUNSELING MINISTRY)

_____ **(Church Name) Lay Counselor**

Application – 20____ (Sample)

APPLICANT: <u>(Last Name)</u>_____<u>(First Name)</u>____ DATE:_____

Address:

_____

_____

Email ID._____ (Ph.no.)_____

(1) What do you believe constitutes effective counseling?

(2) What does being a Christian mean to you personally?

(3) What does it mean to you to counsel others as a Christian?

(4) If you have had previous counseling experiences (either as a counselor or as a counselee) that may be helpful for us to know, please describe them and their significance to you.

(5) What (if any) prior training or education have you had that may help you to be a counselor?

(6) Prior Work Experience (List most recent first)

Job/Work Description: Dates:

_____   _____

_____   _____

_____   _____

(7) Would you please list as reference the names, addresses, and phone numbers of two people who would be able to endorse your participation in this ministry.

Name:_____

Address:_____(Ph.no._____

Name:_____

Address:_____(Ph.no._____

8) Why do you want to be a Lay Counselor?

9) Within the last two years have you experienced (or are you currently experiencing, or expect to experience) any significant life changes, e.g., separation, divorce, death in the family, job change, critical illness, etc. Please explain (use back of page if necessary).

10) Do you intend to continue at the _____ (Church name) as your center of worship and church life? Please circle: yes   no

APPENDIX D

COUNSELEE AGREEMENT FORM

The Lay Counselor is a person trained to listen and care for others. Lay Counselors are pura- professionals, in other words, we are not licensed, paid professional therapists. As Lay Counselors, we are trained in the skills of listening, clarifying and goal setting. Our training and our counseling is supervised by licensed mental health professionals. We offer a response to your personal or fimily needs based on the Christian understanding of giving ourselves to our neighbors.

As a Counselee, I understand the following

1. The contact I have with the Lay Counselor(s) is para-protessional in nature

2. In some cases, I may be seen by co-counselors.

3 All counseling is confidential. This confidentiality includes the Lay Counselor's supervisor(s) (see back sau, "Duty to Warn" for exceptions).

4. I will meet with my counselor for 10 sessions, usually for one 50-minute session per week is the church counseling offices.

5. At the end of 10 sessions, a re-assessment of the counseling situation will be made by both the Lay Counselor and myself. At that time, a new decision will be made concerning the best course of action for me. This may include: referral to a professional therapist, confirmation of my counseling with the Lay Counselor or termination of the counseling session.

6. Out of courtesy to my counselor, I will give at least 24 hours prior notice before canseling an appointment.

I have reviewed the above conditions with my counselor(s) and agree to abide by them.

Counselee Printed Name_____Date_____

_____   _____

Counselee Signature   If under 18. Parent or Guardian

_____   _____

Counselor(s)   Date

I would be willing to allow my counseling sessions to be taped for professional supervisory purposes only.

Counselee Printed Name_____Date_____

COUNSELEE TERMINATION/ REFERRAL FORM

Counselor:_____

Date:_____

Total # of meetings: _____

Counselee(s) Name(s)

_____

How was the termination/referral decided? (Circle those which apply):

Mutual Consent

At counselee's request

At counselor's request

Without counselor's consent

Other

If referral, to whom?

Name/Organization: _____

Phone:_____

How:_____

Date:_____

Referral completed/connection made?

_____

Additional comments:

_____

_____

_____

How did the counselee seem to feel about this counseling experience?

_____

_____

_____

To what extent does the counselor believe the agreed upon goals were achieved?

_____

_____

_____

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